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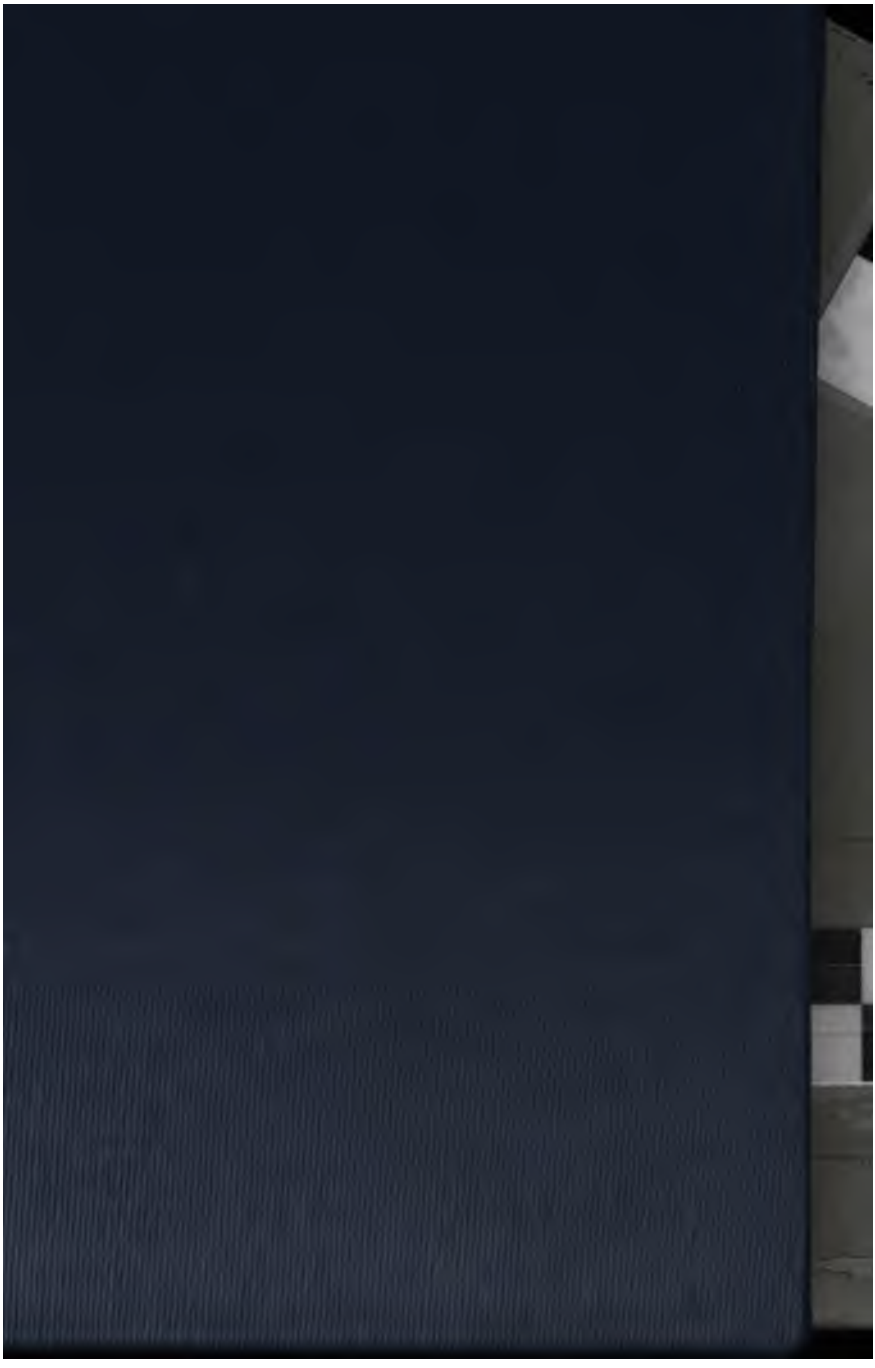

MRS. GROTE.

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*A SKETCH.*

BY

LADY EASTLAKE.

LONDON:
JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET.
1880.

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TO

JESSIE. LEWIN,

THE STAY AND COMFORT OF MRS. GROTE'S DECLINING YEARS,

THIS WORK,

WHICH SHE ENCOURAGED AND ASSISTED,

Is Dedicated.

# PREFACE.

In presenting these few pages to the world, it is just to record how little encouragement they have derived from Mrs. Grote's own bequeathed words. For, in a memorandum written in February, 1878, and addressed to her executors, concerning the treatment of her papers, she expresses the doubt that "any biography could be satisfactorily put together. And, further, I have lived long enough to recognize the futility of all attempts to prolong the memo[illegible] [illegible]vi[illegible] [illegible] those who have attained a large measure of public attention and interest, for more than a few years after their disappearance from

the scene. Thus, while I do not absolutely forbid the effort, I repeat my persuasion of its inutility." Though, therefore, this small work represents no biography, yet the writer feels that something of the same conviction of its inutility is implied by the above-quoted lines. It is, accordingly, in contravention of these words, but in the belief that a nearer view of this lady's character will belie them, that this tribute to her memory is thus attempted by one deeply indebted to her.

This work was ready for publication in the Spring, but delayed by the publisher's wish, on account of the agitated state of the political atmosphere.

*July*, 1880.

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# MRS. GROTE.

## CHAPTER I.

In voluntarily undertaking to give some description of the mind and character of the distinguished lady who has passed from among us, no delusion is entertained as to the nature of the task, nor of the difficulty of justifying the reasons for attempting it. Few things demand more judgment or delicacy than the endeavour to reconstruct the features of a strong and original individuality, so as to satisfy those to whom they have been the source of ever fresh and familiar study, and to impress those who enjoyed no such privilege with the sense of their truth and consistency. Mrs. Grote was not famous, in the usual acceptation of the word.

She was no celebrated authoress; she had performed no extraordinary actions; she had personally taken part in no great public event. Her fame, if such it could be called, was confined to a comparatively small sphere, and rested on grounds which never took her beyond the limits of private life. Nevertheless, the fact remains, that she was so remarkable a woman both in character and attainments, as to call as strictly for the tribute of a record as if she had been historically eminent. And it is the more necessary to draw up this humble sketch while her grand individuality still lives in loving memories. For her published writings, however masterly some of them may be, render but scant justice to the whole woman, and scarcely any to that part of her in which she may be said to have had no rival.

From the many who never knew this lady the question is often heard, "What kind of a woman was Mrs. Grote?" the little they have heard of her social brilliancy not serving in any way to supply the rest of the portrait; indeed,

generally misleading in the conception of it. It is also the more superfluous to enter into any regular notice of her life—one devoid of striking events, and already comprised as to outline in that of Mr. Grote drawn up by herself—for it is not in any outward circumstances that we must seek a key to that superiority with which none came in contact without acknowledging it. Hers was one of those ruling minds which make and shape their own circumstances, but of which it would be vain to pronounce how much they owe to their Creator, and how much to themselves. For no one could listen for half-an-hour to Mrs. Grote without perceiving how nature and education mixed, and crossed, and lapped over in every word and sentiment she uttered; her sense, her humour, and her power ever assimilating the rich and varied materials they alternately summoned, moulded and played with.

It is true she belonged to the choicest portion of the English social scale—the educated and wealthy gentry class—and that she was united

in marriage to a man of the highest distinction, morally and intellectually, who helped to develelop her reasoning powers, and to enrich her knowledge. But if the one might be called her good fortune—though, in whatever position of life, nothing could have kept that mind empty or shallow—the other was no happy accident, for she was not the woman to have allied herself to any man not, as she acknowledged Mr. Grote to be, her "master." In a letter to a friend, Feb. 7, 1833, who alluded to her being "run after," she says, "I live with one so much my master, that the true feeling of conceit is effectually *stopped out*. I am made sensible of my inferiority most days in the week."

It is not under the category of *Genius* that we must seek the solution of Mrs. Grote's character. She possessed fire, imagination, and fancy; but if the strict definition of genius be involved in the term "creative power," she has left nothing to vindicate that claim. She adored genius where she found it with a power of rare and ardent recognition; but she never coveted its

distinctions and characteristics for herself. Nor, when the true healthiness and range of her mind is clearly understood will this verdict be thought any disparagement, but rather the reverse. Genius, with its divine inspirations, may be left to find its way to the admiration of the few, and in the end to the acknowledgment of all; but, as regards the common aims of life, it implies a being of an imperfect order. Genius is the sport of itself, not the master: strong as instinct in some respects, helpless as folly in others; unequal, emotional, childlike, even unconscious. Not one of these definitions could be applied for a moment to Mrs. Grote; the most equable, self-possessed, practical and shrewd of women; mistress of herself, and the sport of no earthly being; with a perfect consciousness of her own powers, and an entire command over them. In truth, the great attraction of this lady consisted in the fact that there was nothing exceptional in her. The difference between her and other men and women was one of degree, not of kind. The

eminence on which she stood was lost in no clouds. All were free to enter on the road that led to it, though they might not climb so high. However remarkable the part she played, there was no mystery in it. It was one secret of her social influence that her gifts and greatness discouraged no one. She understood the whole scale of the human mind; and the humblest mind in return, if only *true*, could in some measure understand her. It followed, therefore, that while all emptiness and affectation, falsity and meanness were sure to be uncomfortable in her presence, and generally kept out of her way, no one attempted to deceive her. It took time, it is true, to convince most people that her grand and haughty manner, tinctured with formality, concealed a heart of the warmest and largest sympathies; but once "the alarm" was over, no one ever more surely attracted the confidence of those so fortunate as to be admitted to her society. It may be said to have been part of her earthly mission that hearts were bared before her, with the certainty of

being kindly understood and wisely counselled. Those, indeed, who knew her best, trusted her most; and the feeling extended to all classes and ages. Friends depended on her; children delighted in her; servants stayed with her; the very dogs pined for her; all obeyed her.* But there was, perhaps, no neutral ground on the way. You feared her, till you loved her.

Mrs. Grote said of a well-known gifted woman, of ill-regulated mind, "She lacks proportion and harmony of parts." The very reverse conveys her character. No gift with her was at the expense of another. Her splendid intellect was never the excuse for the smallest lowering of the moral standard. Her universal attainments never diverted her from the homeliest duties. No humdrum woman, pottering after household trivialities, and caring for nothing

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* A charming little boy, six years of age, a neighbour's child, whom she noticed and talked to in her frank, genial manner, hearing something said about "friends," said, "*I* have got a friend, too; it's Mrs. Grote." There were then eighty years between them!

else, knows so much of common matters as she did. Nothing was too low for her attention, whether in kitchen, store-room, work-room, stable, garden, or field. She knew how everything should be done, from the darning of a sock, to the building of a house. Had Mr. Grote married the most ignorant simpleton in the world, his wardrobe could not have been kept in better order. When removing to a part of Surrey, where she had previously been unknown, the neighbours agreed that such a learned lady would be above knowing what went on in her own establishment. "You are much mistaken," said one better informed. "Mrs. Grote will know when a hoop is off a pail in her back kitchen;" and, he might have added, "and the best way of putting it on too." No one was so practical in every day matters. There was always a better way of doing the commonest things which she could teach; and no lesson was without its point and fun. A gentleman wrote to the *Times* lately, proposing that people should devote one day in their

Christmas holidays to returning borrowed books. He should have known Mrs. Grote's receipt—"I'll trouble you for a sovereign;" and the pledge was ticketed and kept in her purse till the volume was returned.

Nor was there any exaggeration in this. How such matters were compatible with her personal devotion to literature, languages, and the fine arts; her correspondence with the choicest spirits at home and abroad; her habits of society, and her interest, literally, in all that went on in the world, from the fate of nations to the fluctuations of the weather, from the leaders of men to the winner of the Derby,—how all this was made possible, can only be solved by that marvellous habit of order, which, as by the touch of a wand, relegated everything about her to its right time and place. The good fairies who served her were two—Order and Memory. Between them nothing she possessed was wasted, or suffered to get out of repair. Her mind was always "sorted." She could find what she wanted in that noble organ as

first impressions she made on Sydney Smith—this impression being succeeded, as time cemented their friendship, by, perhaps, a wider perception of her many-sidedness and a fuller gauge of it than any other man was capable of forming. Writing to Sir Roderick Murchison in 1842, after a visit on her part to Combe-Florey, he says, "We have had Mrs. Grote here; Grotius could not come. The basis of her character is rural, and she was intended for a country clergyman's wife; but, for whatever she was intended, she is an extraordinarily clever woman, and we all liked her very much."

One natural advantage which most people will envy her,—and which sometimes no culture or habit of society can ensure—we will allow the lady we are endeavouring to describe—*She was never shy*. This gain of a loss, was of a piece with the indomitable courage of her nature, which had something royal in its strength and self-possession. She had always her grand wits at her command, and saw at once with enviable readiness what to do or say.

There was a presence and bearing about her which at once impressed a stranger—you would have selected her amongst any number as the woman, if not of highest rank, yet as most entitled to deference. Her person was tall and stately, her face handsome, with peculiarly delicate tints; her blue eyes so large and luminous that someone likened them to "carriage lamps"; and above them rose that noble pile of head which is as the crown of great intellect. Her manners were formal, but it was a mistake to call them old-fashioned, for all belonging to Mrs. Grote was her own; she imitated nothing, past or present. It was rather the result of a calm and proud certainty of power, and sense of self dependence.

Mrs. Grote has been likened both to Madame de Stael and to Madame de Sévigné. It is evident, however, that a comparison between three women belonging to different countries, and even, it may be considered, to different centuries, cannot be of any close kind. Each, too, in this instance strongly represented the chief

character of her own times, however superior to it; each, more strongly still, an independent originality. Still, minds may be classified in their higher qualities, intellectual and moral, however differing in sphere of action or form of expression; and it may be said without fear of dispute that in power of reasoning, clearness of insight, generosity, courage, and what has been termed "the despotism of speech," Mrs. Grote's mind stood on the same level with that of Necker's daughter. These gifts, too, were applied equally by each to the same great cause of the freedom of mankind, and the justice due to the humblest of their fellow creatures. Nor did Mrs. Grote need to realise the pangs of exile to detest the Corsican tyrant whose petty wrath no woman would more infallibly have excited. She and Mr. Grote not only abhorred the man from whom Madame de Stael suffered wrong, but they erected the opinion entertained of him by others into an invariable test of a mind, soundly constituted, or not. In minor respects it is easy to trace differences between the two women, and

these in Mrs. Grote's favour. Madame de Stael had literally a passion for talk, especially her own. She longed to measure herself against every great man of her time, but more for the pleasure of exercising her own powers than for testing his. There was nothing she dreaded so much as *ennui*; nothing she needed so much as excitement; nothing she so little appreciated as simple pleasures; next to talking she loved acting. In all these respects Mrs. Grote only gains by the comparison; and in two other characteristics, of no small significance in a social sense, Mrs. Grote was the superior. She was a humorist, and she was a listener; Madame de Stael was neither. The English lady came into society as much to hearken as to be heard, and she listened to all worthy her attention, and especially to her own husband. Knowing what she could say if she would, her thoughtful silence became a compliment of the highest order. What Schiller said of Madame de Stael, namely, that she was "all of one piece," was more applicable still to Mrs. Grote, for the moral com-

pleteness was greater with her. In that presiding quality which enhances every other—viz., the quality of strong common sense, Mrs. Grote was as superior to her French rival as she was to most men or women. She would have given precedence to Madame de Stael, not humbly, but proudly, and some may think not justly, in intellectual superiority, but she would have stickled stoutly for the *pas* in that finely balanced wisdom which turns to happy purpose equally the triumphs and the common things of life.

As to the style of conversation peculiar to each of these remarkable women, the only way by which we can judge that of the two French ladies is by their known works: the charm of Madame de Sévigné's Letters consisting in its likeness to her talk—the power of Madame de Stael's conversation in its likeness to her writings. But in Mrs. Grote's case this test unhappily fails. Some of her published writings give the power and grasp of her mind, but there is nothing printed which reflects the wit as well

in the wisdom as in the case of Sydney Smith.* On the contrary, she even sometimes impresses the reader with the sense of a mannerism, the furthest removed from her real nature. The more reason, therefore, that her contemporaries should leave their testimony to her matchless talent, and endeavour to recover traces, though nothing more, of that the memory of which must die with them. It has been justly said that no one is master of an art till he can play with it. By this rule few have reached the mastery possessed by this lady in the art of conversation. Who that has hung upon her words has not felt the ease of execution which revealed the perfection of the accomplishment—the fascinating change from grave to gay—from the enunciation of solemn truths to the absurdest illustration of them; like proving a sum, first by the rule of Colenso, and then by the rule of thumb. Madame Tessé said of Madame de Stael, "*Si j'étais reine je lui ordonnerais de me parler*

* The "Wit and Wisdom of Sydney Smith."

*toujours*." The equivalent to this has often been said of Mrs. Grote. Still, one could hardly give a name to what one so much enjoyed. Eloquence was too stilted a term for what was always fresh, spontaneous and pre-eminently sincere. There was the raciness and clearness and even homeliness of the English mind coupled with the fitness and readiness of the French "*esprit*." She was not witty according to one definition, for the vivacity of her ideas never took that form of exaggeration which is generally supposed to characterise wit; it was rather the *exactness* of her view which gave the sense of novelty, and both surprised and convinced. She instantly stripped a subject of its false colours or flimsy adornment; walked through a fallacy, or tossed over a half truth. All she said bore the impress of past reflection and present readiness. It was Thought, evolved from the depths of a great mind and translated at once into the simplest words—the richest ore from the mine, put immediately into the form most convenient for currency. If the discourse fell on subjects of special science, or

even on metaphysics, she used the right technical terms—otherwise, she took the first that came, and those often the homeliest. She called a spade a spade, thereby not rarely ruffling the small decorums of some minds more tenacious of the letter than of the spirit, but who ever heard an impure word from her lips, or found her tolerating laxity and freedom of speech? On the contrary, there are those who will well remember having been reproved for it. Like Madame de Sévigné, too, she had a vocabulary of her own—including characteristic names for many of her friends—generally enjoyed by the bearer as much as by any one else. One knew also what she meant by "a porcelain woman" or "a pinchbeck man," and what sort of wives those were who made "good adjectives" to their husbands,—or "good doormats,"—or, as in the case of a well-known tempestuous character, "a good shingle beach to break upon."

Altogether, in her own estimate of the two French ladies it was far more her ambition *as a woman* to be compared with Madame de Sévigné.

"The same love of reading," she would say, "the same habit of good society; and always an honest woman." It may be added, the same love of the country and enjoyment of Nature. Madame de Stael is known to have said that she would not cross a room to look at a mountain, though she would travel a hundred miles to talk to a great man—but "Les Rochers" could not be dearer to Madame de Sévigné than "The Ridgeway" was to Mrs. Grote; nor the progress of the young trees "*haut comme ça*" more interesting to the one than to the other. At the same time if the love of Nature was rarer in the case of the high-born French lady, with whom such tastes are seldom developed, it must be said that our countrywoman enjoyed a country life as few even among ourselves do. Who ever cultivated a garden with the ardour she did, knowing and loving every inch of it? or watched with such zest her apples and roses within her "sun-trap," or delighted in her "penny borders," a mixture of all hues and sweets together, instead of the eternal hexagons or octagons of

the same plant and colour, which no one cares for and in which "there is nothing to discover?"—or called a friend to the highest window in her house to share the glories of a sunset, wanting, as she expressed it, "somebody to pinch!"

There is no doubt that, compared with the French celebrities, partly from the progress of intelligence, the greater extent of her interests and sympathies, and the free institutions under which she lived, she covered more ground than either of them. But this concession she would have made light of. Her chief motive for coveting comparison with Madame de Sévigné proceeded from the rank she ever assigned to the moral qualities above the intellectual ones, and to her respect for Madame de Sévigné's untarnished character. Who that heard her on one occasion can forget the expression with which she exclaimed, after much incense burning before her, "But it is a poor compliment after all that it is not my better part for which I am most liked!"

We must now let this lady speak more fo herself, and endeavour by means of the paper and letters she has left, and by the recollection of many years, to present her more full lengt to the reader.

# CHAPTER II.

DANTE thus commences his great work: "Nel mezzo del cammin di nostra vita," by which he means the age of thirty-five. It was at this age that Mrs. Grote drew up a slight autobiography, which will assist in the interpretation of her character. She was at all times deeply interested in the relation between cause and effect on individuals, communities, and countries; in other words, in the results of educational impressions, bad or good, subtle or direct. "During the last eight years of my life,"—that is the period subsequent to her marriage—"I have acquired, partly by application to the best authors who have written on the human mind, and partly by frequent communion with superior men, such a knowledge of the constitution of human nature

and thought as to be able to trace to a considerable extent the relations among the phenomena of men's actions and sentiments." We here see the basis of much of that insight which guided her judgment in the domain of morals, whether applied to the policy of individuals or Governments—the key to that "permanent interest" which in her own words she took "in the advancement of the world in all that regards improvement in knowledge and virtue."

Mrs. Grote was an aristocrat in mind and also in lineage, especially on her mother's side, and she prided herself on coming of a good stock, on the principle that "*noblesse oblige.*" M. Guizot never made a greater mistake than in speaking of her—in his memoirs—as representing the "*bourgeoisie.*" But as an individual she might have adopted Tennyson's line—

"Too proud to care from whence I came."

Harriet Lewin was born 1st July, 1792, at a place called "The Ridgeway" (whence she named her own small property), near South-

ampton. Her father, Mr. Thomas Lewin, had been in the Civil Service of the East India Company at Madras. From the description of her father it would seem that she inherited her more brilliant powers and intelligence from him —whom she describes both as a very fine man, and as a true specimen of the fine gentleman of the day. After ten young years spent in the Indian service, where he had formed intimacies with the chief French residents at Pondicherry, he returned to Europe in the same vessel with a lady of some notoriety,* and lived for some time in Paris subsequent to the Peace of 1782-3. Here he was accustomed to join the Royal Hunt at Marly or the Bois de Boulogne in his English phaeton, four-in-hand, and, in-

* It is a curious link between Mrs. Grote and modern French history, that in the East Indiaman which conveyed her father, Madame Grand—subsequently the wife of Talleyrand, and then leaving India on account of irregularities which had caused M. Grand to divorce her—was also a passenger. This led to an intimacy between Mr. Lewin and her, and they lived at first at Paris together. And it is no less a curious feature of the times that he settled an annuity upon her which she continued to enjoy after she became Princess Talleyrand, and indeed up to the date when Mrs. Grote was writing—1826.

troduced by his Pondicherry friends, was received into those aristocratic French circles who sported to the last on the brink of the grumbling volcano.

Mrs. Grote's mother was the daughter of General Hale,—younger son of an ancient and opulent family in Hertfordshire, connected with several families of our nobility. He lived in habits of society with Lord Chatham, and other eminent statesmen of the day. The tendency of his mind would seem, however, to have been more in keeping with Mr. Grote's modes of thought than with hers, for, at the commencement of the American War of Independence, General Hale took a strong democratic turn, which interfered with all hopes of advancement through his political connexions. He even wrote to his eldest son, about to embark at Plymouth for service in America, desiring him to lay down his commission in the British Army rather than bear arms against the injured Colonists—an order which arrived too late. He himself had been present at the storming of Quebec, and had

witnessed the last moments of Wolfe.* He also assisted at the taking of Havannah, and was the bearer of the despatches announcing that event to the English Government. General Hale married a beautiful Miss Challoner, of "The Priory," near Guisboro', descended from Sir Thomas Challoner, the Regicide. This lady presented her husband with nine sons and eleven daughters—the family being headed by twin girls, the eldest of whom, Mary, Mrs. Grote's mother, married Mr. Lewin before she had attained the age of sixteen. To this early marriage, and the large family which ensued, Mrs. Grote ascribes the totally undeveloped and uninteresting character of her mother, to whom, as with most "fond mothers," her younger babes were dolls to play with, but her growing children never companions to take interest in. It may be concluded that Mrs. Grote was a child of

* Mrs. Grote relates an anecdote (which we give on her authority) —namely, that Benjamin West would have introduced her grandfather into his picture of the death of Wolfe, only that the young soldier could not command so much as £50, which West required as a fee.

splendid conformation, for the name given her from her earliest years was "The Empress."

Mr. Lewin was fond of the sea, and the family passed some portion of the year at Torquay, then a mere fishing village, where two contiguous homes accommodated them, and where he kept a small yacht. The journeys between this place and "The Ridgeway" were performed in a primitive manner. Mrs. Lewin, with nurse and nurslings, in a headed chaise on two wheels, groom behind on another horse, with saddle-bags, and long web-traces, wherewith to assist the chaise-horse up the hills, proceeding at the rate of twenty-five to thirty miles a day; while the little yacht brought the father, governess, and rest of the family to the same destination in about the same time. She records the hard winter—1799-1800—when sledges were used, and when a brother of her mother staying with them, and about to proceed to Canada, walked on the snow with Canadian snow-shoes.

The biography is curious as a picture of the habits of an English family of the upper middle

class of above eighty years ago. Nor can any who knew Mrs. Grote for a moment doubt the fidelity of the picture there given by herself of the child, who so unmistakably became "the mother of the woman." In her own words, "I was forward in my studies, full of capacity and talents, and of a loving, gay temperament, which rose above all suffering, and cheered my comrades to mirth and enterprize." Her attachments were ardent, and generally bestowed on grown-up young women, whom she invested with every virtue. And her dislikes were equally as strong, and chiefly bestowed on a succession of governesses; and especially on one who occupied that position in 1804, and who evidently enjoyed no sinecure. This lady was determined to counteract as far as possible the proclivities her pupil evinced for amusements which Miss Beetham (generally styled "the Beetham") deemed of an unfeminine nature. These were, however, exactly those which the young lady especially affected, "having from earliest childhood shown a remarkably energetic disposition,

and taken most pleasure in active exercises requiring bodily agility, nerve, and invention, and involving skill, and even some personal danger."

Her father's grounds were washed by the river Itchin; and when the fishermen landed to collect driftwood for fuel, leaving their dirty, leaky barks moored to the sedgy shore, Harriet and her next sister would rush to the nearest boat, and each seizing an oar, "shove out into the river for a row," the governess sometimes appearing on the scene just too late, and standing screaming to them in vain on the strand. "And occasionally, when we got into the middle of the river, especially in the winter season, the wind would drive us in on the mud, whence we had to be rescued by the boats of the merchant vessels, generally colliers, which lay in the stream, or at the wharf at 'Northam,' and which towed us into port." "Or we rode horses, bare backed (when we could succeed in catching them), with a bit of pack-thread round their noses." A huge stack of faggots was also a resource for hiding, "at the top of which we

lay quiet for hours, making figures in wet clay." Harriet also understood how to make big kites, and fly them, not unfrequently losing them on the tall trees of the Ridgeway woods. And of course she was a proficient in climbing trees; and even when in London, and out walking, under the charge of the coachman, she would exercise her skill "on the old, black, pollarded elms in the Green Park, near the basin, by Piccadilly, south-west corner. And being fertile" (we'll be bound) "in resources and expedients at a pinch, and as a refuge against the tedium of existence in London, we used to 'dazzle' with looking-glasses the inmates of the upper stories of the Duke of Grafton's house, opposite to ours (in Clarges Street), or we flew a sort of light paper kite across into their open windows, till the Ladies Fitz-Roy lodged a complaint against us."

After these confessions, we can better understand the high-spirited woman, who hated all precocious proprieties, warmly encouraged active sports for girls as well as boys, and especially

for both together, and herself dared do all that might become a strong, healthy, artless human creature; turning her fine hands to everything; even seizing, as she was once known to do, the handles of a certain agricultural implement, and herself tracing a furrow. And of one thing we may be certain, viz., that she looked back on these madcap years with as much satisfaction as on any other period of her *Lehr Jahren*, herself illustrating her favourite creed, that everything may be hoped from a childhood that has displayed "the right faults."

But the confinement of London to these young romps was not of frequent occurrence; for the war kept English families much in their country homes, where generally, and especially in those parts near the coast, the fear of Buonaparte was for years the topic of conversation with their neighbours. As the French mothers in the time of Marlborough were wont to threaten naughty children with "Malbrook," so the children at the Ridgeway used to be told by their nursemaids that "Boney" would be sure to

catch them if they strayed out of bounds. Nor did they ever meet a suspicious-looking vagrant in their walks without hearing that he was "a French spy." *À propos* of this period Mrs. Grote relates an anecdote, which stirs the blood even now. "My father took in the *Courier* newspaper, and never permitted any one to read it before himself. One morning in November of this year (1805) he ordered me to open and dry the paper for him, whilst he was busy buttering his hot roll for breakfast. I did not then breakfast in the parlour, but often went there at papa's breakfast to wish him good morning, and kiss him—a ceremony he never dispensed with to the last moment of conscious existence. As I held the paper before the fire, I was attracted by the sight of many lines, printed in large capitals. So I read the lines, out aloud. I remember the shock it gave to my father when I uttered the concluding words. The news announced was the naval victory of Trafalgar, and the last sentence was, "Lord Nelson was killed in the action."

She notes that the first emotions of love and fear of offending its object were kindled in her when about twelve by a younger sister of her mother, her aunt, Jane Hale, then twenty. "My sister Charlotte was affected in a similar manner; and I remember how we used to compare notes as to what indications of favour we had respectively reason to boast of as proceeding from our '*Deity*.' It was her injunction to study poetry that caused me to attach a value to that vein of literature; and, having received as a present from her a copy of Cowper's Poems, I began to read them with pleasure, although my love of poetry was at that time scarcely born within me." There is no doubt that she owed much of the training of her intelligence to her father, who was devoted to music and to French literature, and enjoyed Shakspeare, and other dramatic authors, having frequent readings, in which all the family—such as were old enough—each took a part. Nor is there any reason to doubt that "the Beetham" did her duty averagely well as an instructress,

and that Harriet received something better than that "scrappy education," too often, she lamented, the lot of English girls.

From a family at Langdown, near Hythe, of the name of Tate, she first imbibed the taste for that classic music, which she would play by heart to the last few months of her life. "It was there I learned to take interest in Beethoven's compositions, which were played continually. They were scarcely introduced into England at this time; and even by the Tates voted almost too scientific and crabbed to be generally relished. But I remember that this music used to affect my imagination powerfully as I listened for hours to it."

The slender biography extends only to 1805; but though no further record by herself exists to fill up the years that led to womanhood, it is not difficult, with expanding tastes, growing attainments, gradual consciousness of power and admiration, and with as much fun and frolic as in her younger years, only of a cleverer kind, to complete in general colours the picture thus

begun. There are those, too, who still remember the beautiful and enthusiastic young woman, with the neat foot and ancle, who was "up to everything"—playing, singing, drawing, dancing, riding, and driving—no less than joking, quizzing, mimicking, and flirting; though all in perfect innocence and gaiety of heart, far removed from the "fast" freedoms that have obtained in the present day.

We obtain a peep of her in Sept. 1817, when she visited Paris, and writes a description of her impressions to her cousin, and subsequently brother-in-law, Mr. Thomas Lewin of Eltham :—

"Every object reminds one of the military character of the country, reduced as the troops must necessarily be at this time. Sentinels posted at the entrance, and soldiers scattered through the towns, lounging in their undress uniforms, talking nonsense to the country girls, and infecting the inhabitants with their leading quality—idleness. I have Sterne constantly in my fancy. Here are all the incidents and scenes necessary to illustrate his inimitable 'Senti-

mental Journey.' I wished for you very often whilst at Paris to enjoy the strokes of character, the wonderful versatility and strangeness of the French, which we should have been able to witness in a snug way. . . . . We were exceedingly well lodged in the most agreeable situation Paris affords, the windows looking into the Place Vendôme, where that monument of Napoleon's successes, as of his vanity, ornaments the centre. The bronze statue of him (which, by the way, some artists told me was a masterpiece) has been removed, and the Bourbon ensign, *alias* a ragged towel, has superseded it. We were lucky enough to cut in for a review of 30,000 troops in the Champ de Mars, by old 'Désiré' in person, seated in a cumbrous open caléche, drawn by eight horses, the Duchess of Angoulême at his side. The troops appeared very fine, the artillery well equipped. The Garde Royale (ci-devant Imperial Guard) are uncommonly fine men, especially the Cuirassiers; and as for the King's body guard, I think it impossible to find such a corps in England

for size, mien, and martial air altogether; but these are all men of family, and find their own horses . . . . We went to St. Cloud, Versailles, St. Germain, Malmaison, and all places worthy of a visit, and for the first time saw buildings worthy of the name of *Palace*, both as to interior decoration, and external splendour. We were fortunate in having some French acquaintances, which afforded us the means of participating in French society of the best description, and it is really very pleasant *pastime;* but, for my part, it would fatigue me too much to be always strung up as tight as my faculties are capable of being. You must never flag, but be constantly ready to return the fire of your neighbour, and must be well primed with repartee, and well-turned pleasantries. The gallantry of the men is very refined; and though it pervades so entirely their behaviour when in company with ladies, it is not the least tiresome or offensive. I admire the ladies vastly. All those we occasionally met were charmingly agreeable; and, strange to tell, not one of them

was embellished by artificial colour, but all as natural and devoid of affectation as country maids. . . . . The worst part of my foreign excursion is that I feel myself grown into a kind of *Buonapartist, malgré moi!* In spite of my previous hatred of his vices, I could not withhold the tribute of applause which the sight of his improvements and benefits conferred on the city of Paris must excite in a candid mind. His talents must have been unbounded! You are sure, if you observe some striking utility in a public department, to be told, 'It was the Emperor's doing.' The roads are excellent, and you pay nothing all over the kingdom. It was he who abolished turnpikes, and made them the business of Government. Every creature who dares, extols his vast genius; and even the very soldiers, who suffered most severely from his ambition, declare their devotion to him. . . . . After this, what can Louis expect? Not to sit *steady*, I fear. We saw him frequently —a great porpoise of a fellow. They are a precious ugly breed these said Bourbons. They told

us he did not give any encouragement to art and science, as Bon. had done, but was always thinking how he could advance the *priests*. Paris is, I do think, the most amusing residence that can be found, and at so cheap a rate too. Accordingly, I almost ruined myself in purchases. . . . . We were glad to find along the road how popular the English soldiers had made themselves. The people mourn their departure, saying, 'We loved them like brothers!'"

Mr. Lewin had meanwhile removed to a place called "The Hollies," in the neighbourhood of Bexley, which he inherited from his father; and there her acquaintance with Mr. Grote was formed, whose father had a neighbouring country residence at Beckenham. Old Mr. Grote held a tight rein over his ten sons, of whom George was the eldest. He wished him to marry a city heiress, and, probably, for financial reasons, objected to a connection with the Lewin family. It is true that Mr. Lewin's £3000 a-year was at that time comparative wealth; but, in her

words, "he was water-logged with a family of twelve children." The young people knew each other for three years, of which they were engaged two. During that time Mr. Grote commenced that discipline of her mind, never indeed subsequently intermitted, to which she owed that depth and fulness of intellectual life, which, far from quenching her natural vivacity, gave it new and worthier materials. Her rare intelligence required only a gentle hand to guide it in paths seldom followed by a young woman, and still seldomer traced by an ardent lover. He set her themes on various subjects, and gave her books to read, on which he required her to send him a digest.

That this was no playwork is confessed in a letter to her mother in after years, in which, by a process not uncommon in gifted minds, she strangely understates her natural tendency. Speaking of one of her brothers, she says, "Emilius will never disgrace you; but you must not form exaggerated expectations of his doing you honour as a scholar. The Lewins

are *not intellectual*, that is certain. They have a decided repugnance to assiduous labour. I feel it in myself, who am entirely a Lewin, and can fully scan the family propensities. Nothing less than the absolute necessity under which I have found myself to work at study, could have induced *me* to apply in the assiduous manner I have done in the last ten years."

After waiting two years in vain for his father's consent, Harriet Lewin met George Grote one March morning, 1820, at a neighbouring church, where they were married early enough for her to take her usual place at the breakfast-table. The marriage was kept secret for a month, after which they took lodgings in Chelsea, and subsequently set up housekeeping at the banking-house, Threadneedle Street, familiarly abbreviated by her as "Threddle." Here, as she expressed herself, they lived in two worlds —"the ancient, and the modern." Plato and Aristotle on the one side, Kant and Bentham, and James Mill on the other, yet fortunately the latter world not inhabited by these alone, for

Mr. Grote shared his wife's tastes for poetry, painting, and music, and even played the violoncello himself. They differed as to society, for he was both reserved and shy—she, as we have observed, neither, though awfully "stately," while little known. But her character in this respect overbore his; for society, especially of clever men, gravitated towards both of them as by a natural law. The way in which the young couple affected each other was very remarkable. Each gave and took an education. He endowed her mind with a more solid basis, she fashioned, mounted, framed and glazed him. People would not have missed the profounder instruction he imparted to her; she would always have been deep enough, and more than brilliant enough, for society, but without her he would have remained, socially, and in a publicly literary sense, almost unknown. "Mill, the elder," she would say, "had seized him at the most enthusiastic time of life, and narrowed him, under the idea that he was emancipating him." His prejudices against rank and against society were strong,

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and she spent her life in dissipating them. She could do this with the more grace, because, when it came to pride and independence, she was every whit as proud and independent as he. "But he mistook great reserve on his own part for stoical principle." Her *forte* was her insight into character, and she enjoyed the curious anomaly of stern republicanism and shrinking fastidiousness in his. "Burning," she would say, "with desire to see all his fellow-creatures equal, yet not able to exchange a word with a common vulgar man without disgust." It was the great distinction and charm of Mrs. Grote's mind that it sympathised with every other—as long as it *was mind*. A choice society of logicians who met every Wednesday and Saturday in "Threddle" in the winter, at the dreary hour of 8.30 A.M., and broke their fast upon the latest emanation of the Mill brain, had her entire respect as well as her ceaseless quizzing. She nicknamed them "The Brangles," and summarized their subjects as "the quantification of the predicate," and "the inconceivability of the

opposite." At the same time she made herself mistress of the leading principles of the science, and would turn them against any unwary adversary with great effect. She had indeed that sympathy with all classes which strong common sense and the faculty of humour give. Mr. Grote had neither, though distinguished by a simplicity, unconsciousness and unworldliness which she admired the more for not possessing them herself. She would have accepted the offered peerage without hesitation, though no one more thoroughly appreciated his refusal of it, or enjoyed the naïve reason principally given. Altogether the observation of his character was a constant source of enjoyment to her. She would tell anecdotes of his utter unconsciousness of his own reputation in the most animated way. We venture upon a few, for they contribute to give an idea of her character as well as of his.

They were on a short visit in Cambridge. Mr. Grote wanted to see the Professor of Natural History, but he was engaged; "dissecting some *cretacea*, or odder name; could not be inter-

rupted — strong magnifying power — powerful light—shirt sleeves up—would not be bothered with anybody." "But it is Mr. Grote." "What! give me my coat, I must wash my hands"—transformed himself in a minute, and would not let him go for two hours.

At Brussels, they went to the "Institut," of which he was member. It was the vacation, and repairing, whitewashing, &c., was going on. They made their way upstairs, "past pots and pails," into the Library. Here the secretary told Mrs. Grote curtly that nothing could be seen—the place was *bonâ fide* closed, &c. She said, "But this gentleman is a member of the Institute." "Who is he?" "*C'est M. Grote.*" "*Quoi! l'Historien?*" "*Justement.*" He rushed out, changed his coat, beat up every official still to be found in the building, and they came in a body with utmost homage and put everything at his disposal. On leaving he said to her, "I *wish* you would not tell people who I am—I can't bear this fuss." She replied, "What have you worked for thus long? Now, if I did not know

you so thoroughly, I should call this a bit of coxcombery."

One more anecdote. Walking together in Hyde Park, there were groups who evidently knew him, and passed on the information to others, looking respectfully at him. Mr. Grote remarked it and turned to her, "Have I got any dirt on my face, Harriet? Is there anything the matter with my *hat?*" clasping that article with both hands. "What on earth are these people looking at me for?" "Because you are George Grote—that's all!"

It may be said that she worshipped his conscientiousness, though frequently wishing it were less superlative. And dearly did she enjoy the saying—by Sydney Smith, we believe —"George Grote is a slave to a pampered conscience." Particularly did she grudge his time and attention to something called the "Brown Trust," an unfailing subject of her raillery and remonstrance. This was an eccentric endowment by an individual of that name for some benefit to animals, for which Mr. Grote had been

left trustee—and which sometimes broke into his short holiday time and took him fatiguing journies to town. "But if the old woman at the crossing were to leave him her executor he would be as punctilious as if acting for a duke, and perhaps more so."

## CHAPTER III.

IT is as well now to turn to the more serious side of her character. Her note-books—or, as she called them, her "Road-books,"—commence in 1827, a year after the date of the fragment of her biography. They are not journals, written day by day, but rather relate groups of events and impressions; working out, sometimes, the large questions that came before her, and evidently serving the purposes of the utmost self-improvement. We see here at once those deep foundations of clear reasoning habits which rendered her so helpful to her fellow-creatures.* The very headings of the subjects dwelt upon

* It was as early as 1827 that letters passed between her and Jean Baptiste Say, the great French political economist, on subjects

here—our peculiar system of legislature—our faulty administration of justice—English, French, and American politics—literature, art, education, farming, society, the opera, the stage, and all during a stirring period of our history—cover more ground than any masculine record of the same kind; for the woman's part is never absent. These note-books are no slight monuments of labour. When people wondered at her conversational powers they were apt to overlook the culture that supplied them, and the trouble that supplied the culture.

It is curious, for instance, to observe a woman, in the zenith of her youth and beauty, analyzing the process and exposing the demerits of our system of grand juries, and entering her arguments against it with logical precision; and at the risk of being thought dry, we feel it only justice to Mrs. Grote to give this side of her character.

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of profound commercial principles. In a letter from him, preserved in "Œuvres Diverses," p. 571, he says, "*Pardon, Madame, si je vous parle tant la Philosophie: c'est la solidité de votre esprit qui m'y excite.*"

It is obvious that a work by the late Sir E. Eardley Wilmot * had drawn her attention to the injustice that could, and therefore did, accrue, by the constitution of our laws in that department. The case of a boy named George Salmon—a mere abstraction to her—became the test of an analysis of cause and effect worthy of a member of the Bar. He had picked up a sack on the King's highway and carried it home, and though it had been restored to the owner, the boy had been committed by "a parson-justice" in Warwickshire for felony. Sir E. Eardley Wilmot, who was a magistrate, perceived the injustice of the committal and bailed the boy. But for this humane interference, which was virtually a happy accident, he would have suffered confinement for weeks with the usually hardened criminals of a gaol. She exposes to the utmost the injury the boy might thus have received,—the injury to his morals by contamination, the injury to his cha-

* "A Letter to the Magistrates of England on the Increase of Crime," 1827.

racter and prospects, the loss of his work meanwhile, to say nothing of the wound to his feelings; and the moral inadequacy of a grand jury's acquittal to secure a poor man from the stigma attending the mere circumstance of his having been in gaol. For the fact that the members of these tribunals are bound by an oath not to divulge their proceedings precludes all statement of the reasons for discharge, though these reasons may have been only of a technical kind. Thus the rejection of a bill by a grand jury is a very imperfect salve for the reputation of a prisoner. "Yet it may be said that, at all events, it does often spare a person the pain of appearing as a culprit at the bar, who would otherwise have to undergo this ordeal. To which, in the first place, I answer, that although it does save some, it does not save *all* who are accused on slight grounds, as may be seen by the occasional acquittals by a petty jury. And it seems unlikely that the grand jury *should* discriminate between guilt and innocence, since, in the examinations they pursue, one side only is

listened to—no defensive matter, either on the part of the accused or his witnesses, being permitted to come before them. Of course, therefore, it must happen that, when a substantial defence can be set up, there must be a wide difference between the aspect of the case before the petty jury and that which it exhibited before the grand jury, and thus a prisoner may be deemed innocent by the one though already deemed guilty by the other. In fact, the absurdity of trying a man twice (which it is), and that by two sets of rules, is quite in character with the bungling system of criminal jurisprudence in England.

"Again, why should the grand jury be better judges of the probability of a prisoner being guilty than the single magistrate who committed him? *He* had more leisure to examine the case than they have, and if *he* could not find out the balance of the evidence, *they* are not likely to do so. The advantage of a grand jury consists, therefore, entirely in the shelter it affords to single magistrates. If no grand jury existed to

take the responsibility off their shoulders, the blame which might attach to a hasty and unfounded committal, would be saddled upon the magistrate or magistrates by whom it was done."

Nor does her analysis end here: she pursues the subject to its utmost limits; exposing the inadequate number of judges at that time, the immense expense of legal machinery entailed on the country, the uncertainty, dearness, and tedium of our forms of justice, the encouragement to the lower tribe of lawyers, and other pernicious results "which have no defence except in 'that stupid reverence for the wisdom of our forefathers,' which is so sedulously inculcated."

At the same time, words uttered by Mrs. Grote and not forgotten by the hearer, show her equal judgment in an opposite sense. "Things which are right in the abstract are not always the best in practice. Our Constitution is a compound of anomalies, difficult to defend, though vindicated by successful usage."

Mrs. Grote was always deeply interested in

the questions of labour and capital, and many are those who have first clearly seen the rationale of these vexed subjects through her eyes. A few racy expositions occur in her note-books at the close of 1829 and beginning of 1830, which exemplify her modes of expression. "When every branch of industry is overstocked with candidates for work, the cry of 'find employment' is echoed from a thousand tongues. Now persons who employ labour are persons who have saved something, or who have inherited from those who lived before them, and who saved during their life. Therefore, in order to secure a perennial fund for the employment of labour, there must be continually a class, or section of the community who are laying by capital, or, in other words, spending less than their income. But to cry out upon people for not spending all they have is the way to cut up by the roots this security for the future employment of workmen and workwomen. . . . . There is in the *Times* newspaper a great deal about the extreme sufferings of the lower working classes,

especially of that portion of them devoted to husbandry. The editor quotes Mr. Dundas, Chairman of the Berks, or Bucks, Quarter Sessions (I forget which exactly), as an instance of a gentleman feeling for the distresses of his country's peasantry; and assuredly he is justified in awarding merit to such a feeling. But Mr. Dundas only reiterates the thousand times repeated injunction on those who have any capital at all to 'employ labour therewith.' Why what else does Mr. Dundas think people of property do with the money they spend? If they spend it at all they employ labour, for nothing is bought unless labour is previously employed on the commodity. 'But people ought to employ more *agricultural* labour than they do.' Well, suppose Farmer Miller takes on three more hands out of generosity, not needing them (for, if he did, he would already have taken them on of his own impulse), he has 30*s*. a week more to pay on Saturday night, and must forego the purchase of some other articles he would have wished for. But suppose instead of employing

more hands he were to *save* the money? What, besides thrift and saving, can place a farmer out of danger of casualties, and falling behind hand? It is reasoning in a circle to say first 'Spend more money on husbandry labour;' but then comes the artisan and cries, 'the stocking-weavers are starving, pray buy more stockings,' and then 'the shoe trade is dreadfully fallen off, for God's sake wear out more boots and shoes;' and so the poor consumer is baited and hunted till he has bought and bought to please all, and at last, when the tax-gatherer knocks for King's taxes and poor-rates, he has been so kind-hearted as to spend all he has, and must give up his goods to the collector in lieu of gold and silver. . . . . The idea of forcing labourers upon capitalists is absurd. You might as well go round a parish urging masters of houses to keep more household servants. The evil, alas! the growing evil, lies in the enormous increase of candidates for labour. Since the practice has been discontinued of keeping and boarding bachelor husbandmen in the farmers' houses,

and thereby providing them with the substantial comforts of a home—without the mischief of having ten children at thirty years of age—population has made such alarming strides, until the clamorous multitude of superfluous labourers approach the tone of compulsion. . . . . I am of opinion that letting a cottar have a piece of land is good, but they should be told that they cannot have a cottage and land until one is vacant. It is not the cottage system which brought Ireland to beggary, it is the extending it too widely, and giving every spalpeen a house whilst he ought only to be a lodger."

She took great interest in the form of education given to the poor, and liberally criticised the School Board. "I hold that the power of reading and writing, together with the habit of simple prayer, preluding to the studies, with equally simple religious maxims and Bible lessons, ought to be the limit of school-teaching at the expense of the public. If the parents wish arithmetic superadded, they ought to pay for it themselves. But 'summing' to the extent of the four elemen-

tary rules is easily learnt, and a boy of ten years old ought to learn them in three or four months without effort. Education beyond these limits seems to me undesirable, because the boys of the labouring classes have to earn their living by farm labour, and in order to learn that business they ought to go to work at nine or ten years of age. After ten a boy learns to bear hardships less readily than by beginning earlier. If indeed the community are become too tender-hearted to contemplate these hardships as a necessary condition of labouring life, why then the relations of capital and labour must be modified, and *that* by interposing artificial alleviations. A cow-boy must not be exposed to get wet through, so 'the kind gentleman' buys him a waterproof cape. A 'kind lady' in my neighbourhood, compassionating the tedium of a herd-boy's day, provided him with a 'story-book' to aid in passing the time; forgetting that 'Nanny' would bolt through the fence whilst 'Billy' was absorbed in his story. I observe boys employed to tend pigs in the acorn or

'mast' season marching about with umbrellas. Time was when they would run under a big tree, or get into a hollow trunk, or under a bank.

"The boys of the present day are not cared for so well in another way as heretofore, however. They feed almost wholly on cold victuals, brought on the Monday morning from home, and eat these apart from the farmer's family. Feelings grow up of the nature of antagonistic interest between the boy and the master. The farmer's wife formerly gave an eye to the farm-boy; treated him as one of the household; if he ailed aught a mess of hot gruel or treacle posset was made for him at night, and she would let him dry himself at the kitchen hearth in inclement seasons. Now the poor boy retires to the cold 'back kitchen' or the outhouse, munches his unattractive meal alone, or along with 'a mate,' and feels himself nowise belonging to the household. This change I regard as one which has brought about a sensible deterioration in the character of the farm servant. The class of farmers, now chiefly cultivating other men's

land, is much raised above that of half a century ago. Accordingly, they dislike the contact of the rustic servant; they live well, and do not like to share their luxurious fare with their inferiors. During the eighteenth century the two classes ate at one table.

"It would be idle to seek to retrace one's steps in what relates to the march of production. The separation between certain classes has increased with the accumulation of wealth, and is an inseparable consequence of it. Many opulent farmers now give no 'harvest-home'—an ill-judged economy, in my view. Again, the habit of discharging a number of the men when hard weather sets in, instead of finding some kind of indoors occupation for them, is another feature of modern days which ought not to prevail among agricultural folk. The men fall upon the parish-rate for support, receive it without shame, and also without thankfulness, while their interest in the farmer who treats them thus sinks to 'zero.' 'High farming,' in truth, is allied to manufacturing industry in these days—

a capitalist, 'a plant,' and skill. 'Food,' the commodity, produced out of the land by the combined action of the elements of capital machinery, and men's hands. The vast scale on which these agencies are employed reduces each labourer to an insignificant unit, and he ceases to take that interest in the various processes of farm life which he naturally feels when he observes the close connection between his own work and its results, the credit of which reflects pleasantly on himself individually. — *Journal*, November, 1861."

But though reasoning thus justly upon some of the causes for the depressed condition of the agricultural labourer at that time, no one felt more truly for him, or took a juster view of the real wrongs under which he suffered. She looked upon his degradation and misery as a disgrace to the land, and his elevation in the scale of being as imperative for the welfare of the community.

The dwellings of the countryman, their cleanliness and repair, especially engaged her atten-

tion. "When he has tasted the comforts of a better condition, prudence and foresight will come to his aid; and, instead of a reckless, swinish, demoralised pauper, we may hope to see a moral and accountable being arise. But the blessed regeneration, if ever it be practicable, can only follow the diffusion of education. Not such useless matter as the *soi-disant* Society for Diffusing Useful Knowledge promulgate, than which nothing was ever more useless — 'the Polarisation of Light,' for instance—considering the classes for whom it was intended."

The dulness and monotony of the labourer's life enlisted her sympathy no less than his ignorance. She was ever anxious to encourage active and rational sports, and often looked on the parties playing cricket on a Sunday afternoon on the heaths near her residence with benevolent encouragement. Lamenting the fate of a body of rioters and machine-breakers at a period of agricultural depression, she says, "The poor labourer is hedged in with prohibitions

about poaching, Sabbath-breaking, the sinfulness of music and dancing, and the wickedness of play-acting; but as to the more important provisions of the laws of his country, he is kept in darkness till he incurs their penalty."

Any one desirous of appreciating Mrs. Grote's genuine interest in her humble neighbours, should read her article, "The Hamlet of East Burnham"*—literally, "the short and simple annals of the (unprotected) poor"—whose lowly rights, as in the instances she gives, are too often encroached upon, with no power of redress. To vindicate these rights was part of the practical view she took of the duties of the higher class. She had the most generous of hands herself to all around her; but she pleaded for justice to the poor before alms to them. She pleaded for justice for all; for another admirable essay, "The Rich and the Poor," sets forth the tyranny of the ceaseless demands for charity, and its inadequacy to meet the real evil. Her

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* Mrs. Grote's "Collected Papers."

answer to M. Léon Faucher's "Études sur l'Angleterre," and to his appeals to the English conscience against the pauperism prevalent here, is a masterpiece of lucid and shrewd exposition not so generally known (unfortunately) that we need hesitate to quote some passages here.

"To begin with the most generally approved specific—increased charity. 'If the rich would only open their purses wider!' cry the plate-holders, 'we should hear no more complaints about want and suffering.' 'It is the indolent neglect of the poor by the wealthy,' say the Puritans, 'which causes the dreadful spread of poverty and crime.' These, and a hundred forms of the same proposition, are as familiar to our readers as the song of birds. . . . . But whilst we estimate the agency of charitable donations as a very inadequate counterpoise to the pressure of the general mass of poverty in a community, it is fair that the wide extent to which the habit of benevolence is practised in England should be placed in a strong light, by way of

proving that the experiment has at least been extensively tried.

"When indeed we look into the amount of what is given, without a shadow of return, by Rich to Poor in this country—not counting various services in person rendered by rich men—its magnitude is astonishing. Setting aside the enormous standing provision for sick and infirm (the result of endowments) and for educational purposes, an Englishman of fortune seldom has his purse out of his hand. He pays in the first place all sorts of legal demands for the subsistence of the poor—next, he subscribes to various public charities, also to ploughing-matches &c., &c.; he assists poor dependents; supports decayed relations; he gives alms on the highways; he drops money into the charity-plate at dinners, and after sermons; he encloses five pound notes to the police magistrates as from 'A.X.' he distributes coals, clothes, and meat at Christmas; he gives land to build a school upon, and contributes liberally to build it; he pays for the doctors of the poor; he lends

to inferiors and never gets paid ; finally, he dies and leaves bequests to half a dozen eleemosynary institutions and humble servitors, and not unfrequently founds a provision for an annual gift.

"The female members of the gentry class are, all this time, toiling at the work of benevolence in its domestic forms — overlooking schools, stitching sedulously at nightgowns and baby-linen, or at 'fancy fair' articles; teaching girls straw-plaiting, lace-making; hearing catechisms on Sundays; tormenting their acquaintance to purchase the useless production of overabundant hands; distributing soup-tickets;—in fine, co-operating, with their gentle kind efforts in the grand and commendable purpose of mitigating poverty in the lower ranks of life. Go into what neighbourhood you will, the standing feature in every country residence is the 'Charity' business. Where indeed is the rural abode where the visitor is safe from the bazaar or the subscription-book? Is there a provincial dinner-table at which the topic of poor-law, board of guardians or the like does not take precedence

of all others? . . . . And all this on the back of a tax amounting to something like seven millions of pounds per annum!

"Such is but an imperfect outline of the 'charitable' habits of an English family of average benevolence and means, for we do not believe that anyone except a native of this island has any conception of the extent to which an Englishman's fortune and time are dedicated to the work of doing good. It is perhaps unmatched in the world. After this, one would suppose that the gentleman (or gentlewoman) who gives and labours in all these forms would be allowed to spend and enjoy the rest of his or her income, and attend to their six children in peace and quiet. Not a bit of it. 'Is it in human nature,' said the late Sydney Smith in one of his essays, 'that A should see B in distress, and not order C to assist him?' The whole squad of humanity-foragers are upon him with their appeals on behalf of some species of misery which they have undertaken to assuage; and, in fact, if we would listen to these eternal

emissaries nobody would have a moment's respite so long as any poor folk could be found lacking something or other, or a disease unprovided with an asylum. Under this sort of persecution the possession of wealth almost ceases to be a blessing, whilst the more wholesome sources of good-will and sympathy are vulgarized and transmuted into the most commonplace of ties—the connection between rich and poor through the medium of the purse." *

No one more earnestly endeavoured to hold the right course between real and false charity than Mrs. Grote. She would have had others go, like herself, to the root of the matter, and endeavour to lift the beggar from the mire and to set him among the self-respecting. She writes thus to a friend (Mrs. Stanley) in 1851 on leaving, after many years' residence, their country house at East Burnham. "The last of *every* thing is sad. This I have ever said, and ever felt, and my final incidents on leaving

* "Rich and Poor," Mrs. Grote's Collected Papers.

confirmed me in this conviction. The farewell of my *humble* neighbours was, however, the most touching of all, and I could not but recognize the sincerity of feelings, which, it was obvious, had no reference to future expectations. Poor cottagers! how much do your real virtues exceed the measure of praise generally awarded them. Knowing, as you do, my opinions as to the futility of *money* beneficence, I need hardly say that *my* relations with the 'poor and needy' have cost me but a small outlay of *that*. But I have given them what they estimate as highly perhaps; attention, sympathy, counsel, and help in *stress*. And this is what rich people find it wearisome to bestow, even where they happen to know how to yield it, which, by-the-bye, is not very commonly understood."

Such was ever the tenor of this high-minded woman's discourse on these subjects. Who that heard her can ever forget her impressive words to an impulsive friend, too ready to bestow alms? "Don't be *slopping* out your money in charity—do some great thing." It is but

justice to add that she was as good and as bad as her word. She bestowed thousands to further a great object, but no one was more ready with the small gifts which she abstractedly condemned.

## CHAPTER IV.

THE biography of Mr. Grote sufficiently attests the ardent part which his wife took with him in the politics of the day, and in great measure curtails this chapter on the subject. Still, there are passages in letters and journals which convey her own more especial sentiments, which it would not be desirable to omit. Her passionate interest in the passing of the Reform Bill is a prominent subject. She looked on it as the great cause of justice and humanity, and fearlessly says, in reply to prognostics of popular strife, "I do not shrink from reforming principles because they may lead to civil war. If political freedom can only be wrung from its foes by war, it must even be bought with that price." "At the same time I am most

anxious to avoid mixing up the sound opposition of the Reformers with the vague lawless spirit of aggression which appears rife among the numerous classes." Speaking of the days that elapsed (Nov. 1832) after the rejection of the bill by the Lords, between the resignation of Lord Grey, and his resuming office, she says, "I shall never forget that fortnight. So intensely exciting was the crisis that we scarce did anything but listen for news, and run about from one house to another."

Few individuals can have entered into the career of a public man with the enthusiasm and lofty aims that characterized Mr. Grote—few also have had a partner so fitted to share, encourage, and even advise; for in this, as in all other interests of life, each was alternately guide and follower. The ardour with which they threw themselves into the parliamentary arena had something of the excitement of a first passion. On Mr. Grote's election by an immense majority, in her exulting terms, as "Senior Member for the Capital of the Empire," she writes in her

journal, "I doubt if ever again I shall experience the intense happiness of those inspiring moments, when I looked down on the heads of 4000 free citizens in Guildhall, cheering, and echoing the sentiments which for years we had privately cherished, but which were now first fearlessly avowed." Other triumphs ensued to the inflexible patriot at her side, but the hopes and purposes which first animated him were, in their very nature, predestined to disappointment. "The race is not to the swift." In after years she looked back with pride on the period during which Mr. Grote had occupied his seat in Parliament, but perhaps with a higher pride on the reasons that had led to his retirement. It was she who had originally prompted him to undertake the History of Greece, and as the hopes of support by his party in the accomplishment of his enlightened views (some of them fulfilled in subsequent years) gradually faded, she sympathized more and more in his yearning to resume that study which has made his name famous. He had done his best for his country, but failing to

succeed, his heart lay elsewhere. In his own words (February, 1838) "the degeneracy of the Liberal party, and their passive acquiescence in everything, good or bad, which emanates from the present Ministry, puts the accomplishment of any political good out of the question, and it is not worth while to undergo the fatigue of a nightly attendance in Parliament for the simple purpose of sustaining *Whig* Conservatism against *Tory* Conservatism. I now look back wistfully to my unfinished Greek History."

It is not surprising, therefore, that their faith in our forms of Government should have suffered. She writes thus to M. Léon Faucher—"August 27, 1839. The tedious Session of Parliament here terminates to-day, and everybody is sick and weary of the name of politics. Mr. Grote and I, who formerly took so much eager interest in all that related to public affairs, now tacitly agree to avoid the subject, and have even ceased to hold much intercourse with those individuals who formed the circle of our friendships in relation to politics. The examples of your country

and our own seem to offer a decided discouragement to the believers in representative government at this present time. . . . You will conclude that our horizon is not much more cheerful than yours. Still, I do think you must be desperately mortified at having been so outmanœuvred by your crafty King. I myself lost a bet on the coalition. I never thought he would break down such a formidable phalanx. We are well pleased at the manner in which the 'Courrier Français'* is now fighting the doctrine of electoral reform. Everything from your pen is more or less effective and thoughtful, and, on this subject, peculiarly congenial to our views. But how slowly do *fundamental* ideas get into circulation! I see no hope for England or France whilst the '*Epicier*' predominates as he does in both countries. All Governments seem to be secured by the fears of the timid trader. I fear *we* are far enough from any available revolution *here*. God knows whether any sound

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* The paper edited by M. Léon Faucher.

improvement would be destined to supervene thereafter! for the theories current among the masses are highly vicious and erroneous."

And again, to M. Léon Faucher in December 1840—after a visit to Sir William Molesworth in Cornwall, when they made the acquaintance of other country gentlemen in that county. "The result of our visit was upon the whole very disheartening as to the state of mind which belongs to the upper classes in reference to '*La chose publique.*' The sequacious deference to the ministry of the day which everyone seems to pay, to the entire annihilation of all enlarged and sound policy for future years, filled us with painful reflections. The attentions we ourselves experienced were exceedingly flattering and cordial, but we can never feel any very great pleasure in the society of people who are destitute of the capacity of viewing the affairs of the world from any point but that of their own individual selfish position."

Mrs. Grote's intelligence and interest, it is almost superfluous to say, were not confined to

questions of the day, or to changes in this country. She felt for other nations, as we shall see further on, as keenly as for her own fellow-subjects. In her opinion of certain foreign governments, and in her forecast of their probable issues, as well as in points of home policy, she was a recognised authority, and may be said to have rivalled Madame de Stael in the inspirations which many a leading man, among whom a few still survive to bear this testimony, derived from her. It was a matter of course that she heartily wished "those barbarians, the Turks, were thrust out from amid the civilised nations of Europe." And she went further still. "The augmenting difficulty of maintaining the Turk in the possession of his European dominions seems an additional motive for sustaining the Austrian government as she stands. For if Constantinople is to cease to be Turkish, it would probably pass to Russian hands, and Austria is the only power through whose help England can prevent such a consummation. Not that *I* ever did regard such

a change of hands with the apprehension felt by many distinguished politicians amongst us." This was penned by her in 1860; and as Turkey and Russia have persevered, "*pari passu*," in the same relative degree of malgovernment, it would probably have been her opinion still.

A significant passage in her journal, as late as July 3rd, 1878, before the announcement of the appropriation by England of Cyprus, needs no comment. "My only disquietude arises from the fear of our undertaking to administer the Asiatic provinces for Turkey as a protectorate! And also I am apprehensive of English annexation of some kind; whether of an island, or a harbour, or a patch of land, under pretence of wanting a coaling station, or a watering station, or a military depôt, or any other pretext. Should we give into designs of advantage to England, we shall cut a despicable figure in the eyes of Europe, though the newspapers will applaud the acquisition as a triumph."

Of Prussia, a country of her particular aversion, she writes soon after the popular outbreak

of 1848: "The singular feature of the Prussian agitation seems to me to consist in the absolute want of able men on the popular side. . . . . A long continued pressure of despotism kills all healthy aspirations for liberty, and produces only morbid desires. Perhaps nothing short of a revolution can shake off her fetters. Varnhagen von Ense writes to us in profound despair of public affairs in Germany. He says the upper classes are far worse than the lower, and strive to perpetuate, instead of abolishing, bad government."

As regards other countries it did not perhaps require much prophetic vision to foresee in 1851 that if Louis Napoleon were re-elected, "he will ride rough-shod over the French nation." There was more sagacity in the prediction in the same year, "he will, I think, seize on any fair pretext to give the Lombards a friendly help to rid themselves of the Austrian rule."

To the last Mrs. Grote carefully followed the course of French politics, and analysed their modes of government, and their public men.

The following passage in her journal bears date November, 1877: "Frenchmen never will comprehend Parliamentary government. They use it as an arena for conflict and little else. I have no confidence in Gambetta, and fear that he will do as Brougham did by the Whigs, viz.:—frighten the country, without helping the *parti de l'ordre* to consolidate the Republic. Between Gambetta and Henry Brougham much affinity is discernible in fact."

Though Mrs. Grote participated up to a certain point, for she was no Republican in heart, in Mr. Grote's opinions, and identified herself in the measures he brought forward, she was far too finely balanced in her reasoning powers to be ever a mere partisan. "Party," in her words, "is the destruction of patriotism," and if by patriotism be meant love of country, and by country its *people*—a definition no German, Russian, or Pole would admit—she may be said to have been the truest of patriots.

But with all her reverence for Liberty, she drew stringent distinctions as to its proper

limits. Deputations to ministers from the working classes found no favour with her. "I object," she says (Jan., 1878), "to the dictation of the outside public on matters of legislation. We seem to be drifting into Roman times when the *agora* was the theatre of political discussion, and the voice of the multitude directed the course of public affairs. It is enough that the working man has a vote for members of Parliament—he cannot be permitted to send his delegate, and afterwards to prescribe to that delegate what line he should take on any given question. The working man is, I regret to perceive, overstepping his legitimate functions! Deputations now beset the executive government in a way quite unusual, and with an air of authority urging upon presumption." Order, to her, was "heaven's first law," and to her view the highest duty and distinction of man was to become what she ever professed herself to be "an honest citizen."

# CHAPTER V.

WE have alluded to Mrs. Grote's enthusiastic admiration for genius, though herself placed on a safer sphere of mental elevation. It was this, combined with her personal feeling for art, which led to what she terms "those important passages" in her life which connect her with the professors of the various forms of art. It is hence that their history—for Mr. Grote went hand in hand with her in the largest and most liberal patronage of artists and intercourse with them—presents a succession of curious chapters, associated with such names as Fanny Ellsler, Ary Scheffer, Jenny Lind, Mendelssohn, Adelaide Kemble, Chopin, Liszt, Lablache, and with almost every musical name of repute—not excepting even that of one belonging to a

former generation, namely Catalani; from her contact with some of whom Mrs. Grote drew and pointed many a fitting moral. It would be exceedingly unjust to the memory of this noble-minded man and woman to omit the mention of one romantic episode which could only occur to two individuals of the truest greatness and independence of character, coupled with strong powers of imagination. The much misunderstood and ill-requited quality, or rather, passion of romance—that ineffable compound of poetry, generosity, courage, and trust—can only be manifested in its genuine form in the person of beings of high endowments, for the romance of fools, or of persons of inferior understanding, is, simply, folly. Such genuine romance induced Mr. and Mrs. Grote to take interest in the life and career of Fanny Ellsler, the "*Danseuse*," and of the little girl who was born three months after her arrival in England. We have ill defined Mrs. Grote if the reader do not retain in mind the exceeding courage of her character. She stood unfettered by any domestic ties, and

with one at her side as superior as herself to all conventional and worldly springs of action. Fanny Ellsler was of a low class, both as to birth and calling. She was sinned against before she knew right from wrong; nor did she possess that class of mind which could have raised her above the debasing atmosphere which surrounded her. But she had that charm of beauty and grace, supposed to be most potent in taming the savage breast and befooling the wise one, and which, silencing the usual scruples, is known in her case to have touched many generous natures, and none, perhaps, in the nobler part so deeply and disinterestedly as the Grotes. They had too soon reason to perceive how uselessly their counsel and kindness were bestowed upon one whom Mrs. Grote calls "that demented Fanny." But their interest, meanwhile, centered in the child, one of the finest promise, whom they rescued from the atmosphere of the stage, in great measure educated, took to their home, and only too much to their hearts; for she became the instrument by

which the undisciplined and capricious mother could torture them. Morally and intellectually the girl was indebted to them for the development of a most beautiful nature, touchingly and unmistakably shown in after years by the grateful consciousness of her deep obligations to them. In the knowledge that they had saved from misery, if not from perdition, such an "*âme d'élite*," they had their reward. "Little Thérèse," dowered with a small sum, of which Fanny Ellsler, in a better moment, had made Mr. Grote trustee—and which in the ignorance of her nature she afterwards charged them with embezzling—married an Austrian officer and a worthy gentleman, to whom she imparted her sentiments of grateful attachment for her benefactors. She died after a few years, leaving one child, a girl. This young girl, Fanny von Webenau, was brought to England by her widowed father on more than one occasion to visit Mr. and Mrs. Grote, and to her Mrs. Grote left a legacy at her death. The fact that such stories are usually not only too good, but too

pure and holy to be true, is the only reason why this incident has by many been vulgarly misunderstood.

Episodes like this are, in their very nature, far more engrossing and exciting, in point of feeling, to the benefactors than to the benefited. As, in all relations between individuals radically unequal, and with the widest divergence in their views of life, the larger and well-ordered mind is sure to be the sufferer. Few have such power to inflict a species of torture on their fellow creatures as those parents, generally, it must be confessed, *mothers*, who, having left to any loving heart who will fulfil them the maternal duties they neglect, capriciously assert their right to resume the possession of the little being whom others have learned to cherish. Mrs. Grote writes to a friend in February 1845: "The charming and gifted child whom we had cherished like our own for more than four years was torn from our arms last June, and the parting caused both George and myself cruel anguish, much augmented by our conviction

that she was destined to pass from Paradise to Purgatory, or haply worse. As this was the second time that we have been cut to the soul at having our little Thérèse snatched from us, without even the decorous formalities of the occasion, we resolved to yield up our feelings no more during the remainder of our lives to impulses of romantic beneficence"—a resolve, it may be added, better formed than kept. Later in life, and with fresh causes for disappointment, Mrs. Grote expresses the same sentiment in a humorous spirit in a letter to Mrs. Stanley:—"The investment we make of our generous and lofty sympathies, is, like every other investment, liable to the risk of a heavy loss on selling out."

Few people, both by power and inclination, were greater benefactors, in the highest sense of the word, than the Grotes, or had greater experience of that base return which "is as our daily bread." The writer of these pages once said to Mr. Grote, "parents are generally the most ungrateful people in the world." She will never forget the solemn emphasis with which

he replied, "You *never* said a truer thing in your life."

The generous reception and patronage which Mr. and Mrs. Grote extended to Mdlle. Lind was owing, in the first instance, to no such romantic feeling, but to Mrs. Grote's connection with Sweden, the married home of her youngest sister, Madame von Koch. Through her and through her brother Mr. Edward Lewin, who resided for some time in Stockholm, she first became interested in the Swedish Nightingale. In the autumn of 1845 Mr. and Mrs. Grote visited Frankfort on their return from a tour, and there made the acquaintance of "Jenny," and saw her in the opera of the "Sonnambula." The result was that Mrs. Grote formed the highest opinion of her powers and told her she was "every inch a *prima donna*," and equal to take Persiani's range of parts at the London Opera. And she subsequently embodied this opinion in a notice of the new musical star—the first perhaps that appeared,—which she sent to the "Spectator." Mrs. Grote

considered her the most gifted singer she had heard since "the hapless Malibran," though, owing to a peculiar and highly excitable, nervous temperament, unfit to cope with the various concomitants of a triumphant career. She had great reason to endorse this opinion in Mdlle. Lind's subsequent negotiations with London managers. It was mainly owing to the intervention of this distinguished lady and excellent woman of business that the accomplished artiste, after forfeiting an engagement with Drury Lane, was prevailed on to come over to England with a view to fulfilling an engagement she had formed with the Opera House. On this occasion the Grotes received her in their own residence in Eccleston Street, at the door of which the benevolent hostess stood to welcome her, with no less a celebrity at her side than Felix Mendelssohn, then on his second visit to England, and about to bring out his "Elijah" at Exeter Hall. At a small dinner next day, where Mendelssohn and Lablache were present, "Jenny," in Mrs. Grote's words, "felt terribly nervous in

singing before Lablache, and indeed broke off in Mendelssohn's song, '*auf Flügeln des Gesanges*,' in which *he* accompanied her. But presently she sat down to the piano, accompanying herself, and sang '*Tra Lira*,' a Swedish air, to Lablache's manifest delight." The night that Mdlle. Lind made her *début* at Her Majesty's Theatre, in the part of *Alice* in "Robert le Diable," May 1847, "I went to Box 48 as usual, and took with me Fanny Kemble and Sir Chas. Lemon. The evening was most interesting to us; Jenny's triumph was complete—Mrs. Butler, after hearing her first air ('*Va! ditelle*'), quietly observed to me, 'your young *protégée* is safe.'"

From this day the same maternal care never relaxed. Parties were made for her in their town house; rest and quiet were provided for her in their country house (East Burnham). She was chaperoned to great entertainments in and near London, and Mrs. Grote even extended to her the ægis of her protection in a professional tour in the West of England.

These were some of the services by which this lady evinced not only her admiration for the genius of the singer, but her kindly interest in the welfare of the woman.

Through the kind offices of Mr. and Mrs. Grote, Mdlle. Lind had the opportunity—and as it unhappily proved but just in time—of making the acquaintance of the greatest of her predecessors in the vocal art. It was at a select dinner at the British Embassy in Paris, in 1849, where "Jenny" was introduced by her English friends, that they met "Madame Catalani (alias Madame Valabrique), once so celebrated in England as a brilliant *prima donna*, as well as an estimable and lovely woman. In the evening Jenny yielded to the pressing request of Catalani that she would allow her to hear her sing, adding '*C'est la vieille Catalani qui vous le demande, et qui souhaite vous entendre avant de mourir.*' Jenny sang the Scena from the 'Freischütz' first; which I thought produced but a slender impression on the company. It did not fall in with *their* musical taste apparently.

However, she next sang '*Non credea mirarti*' from the 'Sonnambula,' which excited lively admiration, and Catalani, who sat close to me on the centre ottoman, kept rocking on her seat and agitating her hands and fan, and murmuring approval at intervals, such as "*Ah, come è bella,*' *Quanto bella è la musicà quando si fa di quel' maniera,*' '*La Carina,*' &c. After this Jenny sang the '*Ah non giunge,*" and finally her herdsman's song with the mountain echoes, which charmed everybody." The trio afterwards dined with Catalani "who was full of agreeable talk, recounting her youthful pranks, her horseback adventures in Switzerland, and her wager of a foot-race at Lisbon with a Count or Baron Somebody, which he won by a very slight difference indeed. She related these girlish anecdotes with a charm and zest quite captivating." But the "*avant de mourir*" assumed a meaning little foreseen, as regards time, by those who heard the words. Only a few days after this meeting Catalani died from the effects of an overdose of laudanum administered by her doctor.

Those who personally knew the great and gifted Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy during his many visits to England—how much there was to admire, love, and respect, independent of that in which he stood alone—will readily believe how natural and even inevitable it was that the warmest friendship should have been formed between him and the Grotes. Nor need we to be assured that no pain ensued from this "important passage" in her life, except that occasioned by his early death. Their intercourse began in the London Season of 1844 when he soon discovered (as who did not?) that she stood as much alone in practical kindness as in intellectual power, and æsthetic judgment. The Operatic world has its necessary diplomacy, especially in foreign affairs, as much as any European Court; though it has seldom the good fortune to find a lady of the best society, conversant with the world, with business, and with art, ready and willing to enter into the negotiations and mediate in the treaties which precede the appearance of a new star. There was that

about Mrs. Grote which made most people feel her good offices, and they extended into every department of life, as much a compliment as a kindness. To the artist world especially her attentions were as flattering as they were substantial. She sought their society as well as their genius; invited them to the select dinner, as well as to the general crush; and was always as ready to refresh them in the quiet of the Burnham Beeches as to display them in her town residence. For, with her strong good sense in the management of health, she knew the necessity of occasional solitude and pure air for the over-excited children of genius, and the recklessly-hunted objects of fashion. She preserved a note from Mendelssohn in answer to an invitation, showing a day's work in London. "I should be most happy to join your party on Tuesday evening, and if I possibly can I shall not fail to do so. But excuse me if I should not *be able* to come. For I have on that day a rehearsal at ten—a concert at two—another rehearsal at five, and a rehearsal of my St. Paul at

eight, to conduct." In a nature of the highest nobility like Mendelssohn's, so indifferent to adulation, and so sensitive to real sympathy, the appreciation of his art as of himself on the part of both these distinguished individuals was peculiarly acceptable, for he knew it to be, what artists feel to be so rare, a tribute *with understanding*. As an excellent classic scholar himself, he was especially gratified with the interest the great Greek historian took in the music of Antigone, and expresses in a letter, written shortly before his death, the pleasure with which he anticipates making Mr. Grote acquainted with another "*Sophocleischen Chor*," in which he feels he has succeeded more happily in rendering the cheerful Greek character — ("*der heitere Griechische Ton.*")

And in proportion with their appreciation of this gifted man during his life, was their estimate of the world's loss at his death. Among all the expressions of sorrow that arose, none did him the justice he would most have coveted more than the following lines from Mrs. Grote's

journal. Speaking of the immediate causes of his death—supposed to be the renewal of his sorrow for his sister's loss. "However this may be, we have to deplore an irreparable loss in this illustrious musician, to whom we owe the most finished productions of a serious dramatic kind that the world has heard since Handel, as well as numberless charming compositions for every class of instrumental performance. His single songs too are some of them unrivalled for passionate feeling and science combined. Our sorrow and regret at his death are of the most poignant character, for never more shall I behold in mortal man so splendid a union of sublime creative-power, with the morality of the private citizen."

Mrs. Grote's knowledge of music was wider and profounder than that of the sister-art, though even there she obtained no small proficiency both in practice and judgment. Nor were her powers less generously applied to do justice to its votaries. Her life of Ary Scheffer remains no less a record of that great artist and inde-

pendent man, with whom no lady, however high in rank, could take a liberty, and in whose studio no man ventured to smoke, than of the deep feeling with which she undertook the task. In her own words, "to portray the character and follow the course of a man highly endowed, and yet destined to suffer rather than enjoy, forms an absorbing occupation—and all the more since the life of Scheffer unites in itself the two streams of human purpose in which I myself take the greatest interest—viz., art, and political action. His spotless integrity, his great gifts, his inflexible political principles, and withal his sadly sombre existence, combine to shed over the history of Ary Scheffer a mingled effect of admiration and pity."

It was owing also to her exertions and liberality that the Society of Female Artists was set on foot in 1857. She engaged the interest of many friends, both in the form of contributions and patronage. But Mrs. Grote herself, with the late Mrs. Stanley—not to omit Mr. Grote, who became guarantee for the rent of the exhi-

bition-room—were the main and indefatigable workers of an Institution, which, however modest in its pretensions, remains active and useful to this day.

It would be easy to swell the number of those engaged in art to whom this lady acted the part of a good genius; but we have quoted instances enough. By this time the reader will have formed some idea of the numerous interests for which her heart and mind made room, and the amount of work she undertook, and never undertook without thoroughly performing. No one ever grasped objects more multifarious, various, and apparently anomalous; but whatever she grasped she held. No matter who the *protégé* for the time, what the study, how wide the circle of hospitalities, how engrossing the domestic duties (for two girls and a boy, children of Mr. Grote's brother, were brought up as their own), how frequent the journeys at home and abroad, how merciless the interruptions—and especially those of too frequent bodily suffering —no matter what the buying and selling, farm-

ing and building, repairing and altering—for all fell on her—the proofs of Mr. Grote's History of Greece, during a period of ten years, never went to the printers without her close supervision. The great heart, the great conscience, and the great order did it all.

# CHAPTER VI.

In respect of friendship and frequent residence it may be said that France became for Mrs. Grote a second home. Mr. Grote and she in great measure anticipated that closer union between the two countries which the greater facilities of later years have encouraged. It is quite possible that her father's early connexions with Paris may, in the first instance, have entailed on her a few French interests; but the main causes which led to their intimate knowledge of French affairs, and friendship for various leading individuals, were of a political character and origin. The strong opinions held by both in contemplation of the necessity for our Reform Bill, contributed

to inspire them with an analogous interest in the political condition of the French people.

In the year 1830, when the Liberal portion of the Chamber of Deputies had (in March) so far overpowered the Ministerial party as to carry the Address to Charles X. expressing lack of confidence in his ministry—a measure which led to the prorogation of the Chamber—the Grotes first visited Paris, and formed acquaintance with the Says, the Comtes, with Léon Faucher, Odillon Barrot, Duvergier de Hauranne, and other Liberal leaders. Above all they paid a visit, which Mrs. Grote always reckoned as an historical page in her life, namely to Lagrange, the seat of Lafayette, near Mélun. "This had long been an object of ardent desire on our parts—we passed three days and nights at Lagrange—memorable days too! during which we both experienced an enthusiasm of political feeling, together with an exaltation of moral sentiments such as kept us all the while in a perfect fever of emotion. The venerable and virtuous patriot"

(then 73 years old), "behaved towards us with a cordiality and kindness we shall never forget. He devoted himself, in fact, to our society, with the exception of one day consecrated to objects of public interest, when an assemblage of electors for the Department of the Seine and Marne took place at Lagrange for the purpose of concerting measures to secure the election of George Lafayette—the eldest son of the General—who indeed richly deserves the esteem and affection they bear him, for the arrondissement of 'Provins and Coulommiers.' I shall long treasure the impressions I received from our sojourn at Lagrange. I was so filled with gratitude and admiration that at our departure I could hardly utter a word, for my heart overflowed at my eyes." She adds—"The evidence on the part of the people to obtain a better government was extensive and indubitable. . . . . When we took our leave of Paris we felt a conviction that a convulsion in public affairs was at hand, and the publication of the famous '*Ordonnances*' which reached us within three weeks

of our return to England prepared us for the conflict."

From this time Mrs. Grote kept up relations of friendship and interest with individuals of political and literary importance in France; and after the '*Coup d'État*' of Louis Napoleon every man of distinction who abjured office under him may be said to have been included among their circle of friends. It was but natural that they should recognise her admirable judgment and prize her sympathy; but more even than in England the vigour of her thoughts and the original manner in which she expressed them were appreciated in a country where conversation is more a national art than with us; and, it must be added, friendship, more a national instinct. She met them as an equal in letters and politics, was fully furnished to sustain all arguments on subjects on which the two countries essentially differ, and, as it proved, was able to convey even in a foreign tongue that ready vivacity and power which were peculiar to herself. No definition does her

more justice than one expressed by M. Léonce de Lavergne in a letter to M. Alexis de Tocqueville:—

> Esprit clair et pénétrant comme un homme,
> Fin et sensible comme une femme,
> Gai et sérieux à la fois.*

Her perfect familiarity with the pros and cons of our rural economy, as compared with that in France, especially opened to the political thinkers in that country a chapter which few Englishwomen, and fewer, if any, Frenchwomen, could have sustained. A proof of this has been given in the quotations from her article on M. Léon Faucher's "*Études sur l'Angleterre.*" *À propos* of this article on "Rich and Poor," M. de Tocqueville writes to her—(1850), *C'est le bon sens des économistes Anglais, aiguisé seulement et coloré par l'intelligence et l'imagination d'une femme—ce dont il a souvent grand besoin.*

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* M. Léon Faucher gives an analogous tribute — *Mais je vous donne ici mon jugement au lieu d'attendre le vôtre, toujours sûr et sain, et qui donne à la raison la tournure piquante de l'inconnu.* Biographie et Correspondance, vol. i. p. 108.

Her correspondence with M. Léon Faucher, editor of the *Courrier Français*, and subsequently Minister of the Interior under the Republic, and with his wife, is a specimen of those cordial friendships which at that time, more especially, existed between a few choice spirits on each side of the Channel: developed on the English part by admiration for the galaxy of French intellect which then shone forth; by respect for domestic virtues and happiness previously too little known; and by intense sympathy for their national misfortunes. There were few harder worked men than Léon Faucher, and on occasion of his health once giving way she thus writes to Madame Faucher:—"Sept. 13, 1842. We are only amazed where he found physical powers to sustain him during a struggle against difficulties, discouragements, and disgusts which must have exceeded all conceivable measure. The energy and untameable spirit which characterise your remarkable husband have doubtless furnished him with a sort of desperate ardour and courage, now and then

enlivened by arriving apparently at the brink of the desired successes. But the reiterated experience he has now so dearly purchased has proved how unequal his comrades were to the enterprise he urged them upon, and dispelled all his long-cherished hopes of accomplishing the problem of representative government by means of a compact phalanx of honourable deputies, bound to concur in a determinate object. All combinations of individuals in the French Chambers appear like ropes of sand. Nothing short of the regular drilling of an aristocratical section will keep men from swallowing casual baits. 'Outs' and 'Ins' are the only classifications capable of acting continuously on men's imaginations. In French politics all manner of conjugations among political parties are possible, and a shuffle of the cards may make a man's fortune. Hence the abominable shiftings and trimmings of your Deputies under the *mesmerism* of your great Operator."

Later in the same year she writes to the same lady:—"It will give us sincere pleasure to learn

that he has withdrawn from the feverish culture of political objects, and that he has chalked out for himself a course less fraught with *moral nausea*. It is painful to be obliged to wish honest men *out* of public life, but the truth is that under the present phase of your affairs in France, nothing good is likely to be accomplished by an inflexible journalist, ill seconded by a fluctuating fraction of the Chamber of Deputies. I see all Léon's difficulties, and that, notwithstanding the reputation he has acquired, and the personal influence he exercises over the public mind, his usefulness cannot be *now* said to be a fair equivalent for the disgusting incidents of his position; rolling up the *Stone of Sisyphus*, and losing his health, his hopes, and prospects of independence, at the same time. However serious such a step, I still think he would do well to retire from public life, at least for a season. He can employ his talents and resources otherwise, and you will derive comfort from seeing him calm, and devoted to useful closet study. In fact, a man who can write as

he can, should compose *books*, such as shall be read and re-read, instead of daily commentaries destined to pass into oblivion, how excellent soever."

It was no small tribute from Mrs. Grote to praise anyone for habits of precision and the performance of promises, and M. Léon Faucher knew the value of the following words: "A thousand thanks for the '*Revue des Deux Mondes*.' You are one of three individuals I have known in my life whom I consider to be *men of business*—once a thing confided to *you*, it is safe. Many friends would go 500 miles for me, but not two would have despatched this commission. It cost trouble and pertinacity—*voilà!*"

The position of a journalist which M. Léon Faucher occupied was unfavourable to him, as to other French gentlemen of the same profession, in his attempt to obtain a seat in the Chamber of Deputies. At Corbeil, in 1840; at Valérie, in 1842; and at Rheims, in 1844, his candidature, though on each occasion accompanied by circumstances highly complimentary

to him, was unsuccessful. Later, in 1846, having meanwhile renounced the labours of journalism, he was invited to stand again for Rheims, and elected. The Grotes were then staying at the Château de Tocqueville, whence she thus writes :—

"August 4, 1846. Dear M. Faucher,—I am so enchanted at learning the news of your successful contest for the representation of Rheims, that I must 'let fly' a letter of congratulation without any delay. In this feeling my husband cordially joins, and will, I believe, give utterance to it by the same post. Meanwhile, I address myself as much to Madame Faucher as to yourself; for your two hearts beat with but one pulse, and your triumphs are hers, no less than your vexations. At length, then, behold you safely landed on that shore towards which your efforts have been for so many years directed. You are now, *indeed*, 'a public man;' acting, instead of teaching others to act, will be your business henceforward. I feel no apprehension of the result proving your capacity for

political usefulness. The rare union of intelligence, mental activity, and probity, which you bring into that assembly of which you are become a member, can never miss its aim, or disappoint your partisans. I pray only for the continuance of your health. . . . . If you do not rise to a prominent station in your country's eye, it will be a proof that the best men in it are not the men preferred, which I will not yet believe possible. When I read a day or two ago the result of the first ballot at Rheims, I trembled for your chance; Alexis, (de Tocqueville) also hardly expected you to win. Judge then of my joy yesterday evening when he called out, '*Faucher est nommé!*'"

In the same letter she conveys, with a touch, the impression of the ready stores of information which distinguished this gentleman, and at the same time gives a specimen of the familiar converse between Mr. Grote and herself. Those who knew them both will hear the two voices. "I often exclaim as we travel in this enchanting Normandy (we came by Abbeville and Rouen,

and by Pont Audemar and Caen), how I wish we had Léon Faucher with us to explain everything we do not know the reason of. *He* knows everything, from the make of a ploughshare to the date of a 'Tourelle'—doesn't he, George?" "Yes, indeed, he has almost universal knowledge of what concerns material existence, as well as intellectual accomplishment."

The death of Léon Faucher (Dec. 14, 1854, only fifty-one years of age) was a great grief to his English friends. Mrs. Grote continued her correspondence with Madame Faucher, whose thoughts, as with most widows of eminent men, turned to some fitting form of recording his life. In this Mrs. Grote's good sense thus expressed itself, while her ready good offices ultimately helped her bereaved friend.

"Feb., 1856.—If really you discover that a biographical memoir of our lamented Léon cannot be offered to the public without risk of drawing down the displeasure of the existing Government of France, well, then I should in your place *reserve* the *publication* of it until a

period when the truth shall be more acceptable, and capable of being told. But on no account would I delay putting the narrative in order, and collating the original *pièces justificatives*, so as to substantiate the statements made in your memoir. Once composed, under your vigilant and discriminating eye, the work will be *safe* against the contingencies which always attend protracted purposes; and Léon's honest and enlightened course of political action will be traced and illustrated for posterity—*perhaps* even for our generation. You are as well aware as any one of the impression which is abroad, that Léon was one of the chief contributors to the ascendancy of the actual Ruler of France, and, consequently, that his labours, in organising the departmental *régime* under the Ministry of the Interior, were in the end productive of more evil than good. Under present feelings, therefore, the great capacity displayed by your dear husband is regarded with a kind of jealous regret, which stands in the way of its true appreciation. It must be the task of his

biographer to show that the honourable and strenuous labours of the minister were guided by a pure desire to consolidate the Republic, and that no one felt half so poignantly as Léon himself the pain that was caused by the fatal transfusion of that *régime* into absolutism afterwards. In fact, as I have again and again affirmed, *he was killed* by the *coup d'état* of 1851. That Léon was deceived in his estimation of Louis Napoleon is true; but this error was shared by many of the most clear sighted of his contemporaries."

Her letters to Alexis de Tocqueville are of equal, if not superior interest, and extend to a later date of that humiliating period of French history. Of all the French gentlemen who obtained her friendship, M. Alexis de Tocqueville stands foremost. They had made acquaintance on his first visit to England in 1835, when she thus describes him in her journal:—

"M. de Tocqueville—a small and delicate looking young man—is a most engaging person. Full of intelligence and knowledge, free from

boasting and self-sufficiency—of gentle manners, and handsome countenance. In conversing he displays a candid and unprejudiced mind—about thirty-two years of age" (in reality only twenty-nine), "of a noble race in Normandy, and unmarried. His companion, M. de Beaumont, is a large athletic man, full of life and vivacity, and of very agreeable conversation, but not so *interesting* as Tocqueville."

Writing to M. Léon Faucher from Sydney Smith's rectory, Combe-Florey, Sept. 3, 1841, she thus speaks of Tocqueville:—

"Few lives can be more precious than those of thoughtful, patriotic *gentlemen*, amid the conflict of meaner passions which political agitation is apt to generate. They act as mediators between the angry parties, and whilst they espouse the interests of the many, do not forget *justice* to the few. I admire his last work extremely, but not on account of its interpretations so much as its *observations*. . . . Who but Tocqueville has ever gone below the surface of American character, or drawn general views of

the moral influences exercised by the peculiar forms of the political institutions of the United States?"

It followed, naturally, that the friendship which ensued between herself and de Tocqueville played an important part in both lives. No letters among the edited collection are fuller of that peculiar happiness of thought and expression than those addressed by him over a long series of years to Mrs. Grote. He was, as is well known, one of the most fastidious of men, equally as to the conversation of others, as in the expression of his own thoughts in writing. He writes to her:—

"Causer, est à peu près le plus grand plaisir que je connaisse, quand l'interlocuteur me plaît —condition rarement remplie, il est vrai, et cependant nécessaire—car c'est en particulier de la conversation qu'il faut dire ce que Ésope disait de la langue en général, 'qu'il n'y a rien de meilleur ni pire.' J'ai fait cent fois cette expérience, et souvent d'une manière très-facheuse; car je ne possède pas en même degré que vous la

double faculté de retenir les gens d'esprit, et de chasser les sots." *—December, 1853.

There was an identity of position between Tocqueville and Mr. Grote, taken as individuals, seldom traceable in the same measure between persons, not so much of different nations as respectively of the most genuine English and French birth and breeding. Both were men of letters and of studious habits; each had taken part in the administration of his respective country; each was in those circumstances which gave freedom of travel, of hospitality, and of literary resources; while Tocqueville approximated nearer still to the English type by the possession of a family country house, and by his residence in it. The consciousness of this, and more than this identity, did not fail to strike Mrs. Grote, and in letters both to Tocqueville and his English wife, returned to her after his death, we find it expressed and expanded in terms of

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* Mrs. Grote prided herself once to Sydney Smith, on her patience in enduring bores—"That may be, dear Grota" (a name by which he always called her), "but you do not conceal your sufferings!"

singular beauty. Writing to Madame de Tocqueville in 1849, and hoping that public affairs have not interfered with the happiness of their private life, "a life," she adds, "so congenial with that which I have the advantage of leading, and which seems to me singularly resemblant with ours—without children—all in all to each other—the *man* a scholar, intellectually disposed and meditative, yet embracing the fatigues of a public function out of a sense of patriotic obligation; fond of seclusion, and refined in his sentiments; and fulfilling the gentler duties equally with the severer. Behold, my dear friend, a slight sketch which may serve for both the virtuous men whom we are so fortunate as to call by the sacred name of husband. This analogy in our position serves not unfrequently to revive the thoughts of you and your dear Alexis."

She expresses much of the same later to Madame de Tocqueville, on the occasion of his accepting the post of Foreign Minister under the President (Louis Napoleon), in 1849—an act

which filled some minds with apprehension, and has been, as was the case with Léon Faucher, a lasting, however unjust, accusation against him. "Few have followed the thread of your aspirations, pains, pleasures, anxieties, and hopes, as I have done, and truly because my course has been in so large an extent similar in character. Both of us have poured our *all* into the more precious *vessel*, and have been content, nay proud, to efface ourselves for the sake of seeing another being shine more brightly. It is thus that the higher description of *womankind* invest their gifts, to draw back their rich reward. We are incorporated with natures worthy of our devotedness, and thus enrich our own without losing our sense of independence. But there arise occasions on which these intense sympathies touch us all too nearly, and when we *vibrate* under a disquieting sense of undefinable peril. The present moment is one of almost painful interest for you and M. de Tocqueville. The circumstances under which he has ventured to clothe himself with the functions of Foreign

Minister, inheriting as he does the legacy of more than one political blunder, are certainly grave enough to inspire the minds of all thoughtful persons with sadness. You need not be told how profound are my esteem and respect for Alexis de Tocqueville, and therefore you can guess how ardently I hope to see him come out of these embarrassing difficulties with honour and credit. Still, I see much to inspire uneasiness in your bosom, for he has the double difficulty of a bad game to play out, begun unwisely, and intractable partners to play *with*."

But the terms of rare equality and sympathy in domestic circumstances which existed between the friends only served to sharpen in the mind of M. de Tocqueville the sense of the humiliating contrast as to national conditions from the period of the *coup d'état*. With all his experience and enlarged study of other countries he fell short in that knowledge of the English people, which, it may be said, it is simply impossible for a foreigner to attain. Hence the distress and even resentment he

evinces in a letter to Mrs. Grote on the sentiments expressed by the English press, and actually held by parties in England, in favour of the man who had robbed his country of those liberties which our own prizes most. A change in the tone of the *Times*, which he understands had become "*Napoléonien à moitié*," on the occasion of Louis Napoleon's marriage, had especially tried him, so much so as to evoke Mrs. Grote's most earnest sympathy, and to induce her to endeavour to allay this feeling with all the arguments in her power. We have said that nothing occupied her more deeply than to trace effects to their causes, especially in all things appertaining to national manifestations. It is as well, therefore, to give at length a letter of a most sagacious character, which peculiarly illustrates this, her favourite vein of thought.

"HISTORY HUT, *February* 13, 1853.

"DEAR M. DE TOCQUEVILLE,

"Your letter of the 5th February reached me safely two or three days ago—

thanks to our common friend E.* It has moved me so much that although my head be not altogether in trim for writing, I must try and place before you some considerations which you will, perhaps, find useful in surveying the relations at present existing between our respective countries.

"At the risk of alarming you lest a *thesis* await you, arranged in the shape of a treatise, I will venture to set down my thoughts under distinct heads, and will take for the subject of my first the answer to your sad appeal; why and on what grounds has our Press shifted its tone, and slided into *quasi* approval of L. N.?

"1stly. We have now kept up, *during twelve months*, a pretty sturdy fire of reprobation against the usurpation. Both its principles and details, its crimes and its blunders, have received the most unsparing treatment at the hands of our leading organ of public opinion, the *Times*—the only important newspaper which

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* At that time letters from men of note did not pass unopened through the post. Those addressed to Lord Cowley by that channel were opened and read.

has at all changed its language—and I think the ability and talent displayed in its hostile comments have been equal to any that it has ever brought to bear upon political events. Up to the period of the marriage the *Times* maintained its inexorable tone; and on the subject of the marriage itself there is little doubt but that its directors would fain have persevered in their caustic remarks. But about this juncture, their own impressions and wishes were met by more than one counteracting current out of doors. I will particularise some of these for your information.

"In the first place, the Englishman becomes tired of harping on one string too long. The railing against L. N. and his doings had grown somewhat stale as a leading topic. The majority of English readers had had enough, perhaps more than enough, of his perjuries, his profligate disregard of honourable motives, of character, &c., &c., when, just at this moment of satiety, he happens to commit an act wholly out of the category of crimes it is true, but

challenging criticism on grounds only recognised by the higher class of politicians and statesmen who appreciate the bearings of such affairs on the European world at large. On this occasion, however, the English *people* (ever wholly unrecognizant of Continental mysteries and red tape traditions) have certainly felt something akin to an approval of L. N. 'for having had the courage to choose a wife *for herself*,' at the sacrifice of Lord knows what displeasure on the part of contemporary monarchs, and the censure of his own '*parvenu*' family, bent on consolidating their empire and dynasty by the recognised methods. Again, the plausible views which L. N. put forth in his announcement to the Senate imposed upon many minds; and you must allow for the tendency of mankind to sympathise with a tender passion, *quand même*. Well, this affair, turning aside the attention from L. N.'s crimes to his private affairs, the press began to feel that to persist in its diatribes under actual circumstances would be to outrun the public sentiment; and I know that for some

time *prior* to the marriage the *Times* received no small amount of remonstrance from its *clientèle* in reference to its pertinacious battery against the Emperor and his family. The necessity, too, of observing the dictates of gallant respect to the sex counted for something with a journal aspiring to lead the tone of the great world. And the comments on the marriage were accordingly penned with moderation, and, as I venture to think, with judgment.

"2ndly. The English papers are not aware of the discredit attaching to the Empress on account of her mother's irregularities, or of the eccentric character she herself has acquired. Your press is altogether null as a source of information, whilst *our* Paris news comes filtered through an English pen, writing under constraint—though not, I believe, under bribes—and at the peril of extradition. The English press, again, must not be held as *reflecting* the public sentiment in what regards foreign topics and events. There are several morning papers, some prompted by Lord P.,

who have all along written favourably of the usurpation, but you must not believe that they *represent* the feelings of their readers—they rather seek to influence and corrupt them as to foreign affairs, knowing how little the provincials have the means of informing themselves on such points, and especially as to the feelings of the French people. In fact, but for private correspondence and even that is difficult and fettered, *we* should ourselves feel extremely at a loss to interpret much that we hear and read of in France. You would be surprised to see how a letter from Paris is run after by our London friends, and with what curiosity the opinion of eminent Frenchmen is listened to in our private circles. The *Public* is taught by the Conservative organs to regard L. N. as the great antagonist of the extreme republicans (than which nothing can be more false), and as such entitled to a certain measure of forbearance and toleration, if not of a further stretch of favour. The exceeding ingenuity with which his partisans and organs have invested him with this mission,

viz., 'to save France from anarchy,' has told somewhat upon 'the party of order' here, as well as upon the *poltroon party* of your own country, and it is not surprising therefore that many English people should incline to view L. N.'s rule, odious though it be, as an evil of *less* magnitude than civil war.

"I now pass to the other considerations, which (apart from the *sentiment* entertained as to his detestable course of conduct by our very best citizens) dispose us to use more reserve than has hitherto been practised in criticising the acts of your Ruler. We are extremely disquieted by his extraordinary preparations for war. We should feel uneasy and anxious even supposing our own armaments were tolerably efficient for defence. They are far from such, however, as all the world may know, and hence our alarm for our own safety. To provoke L. N. by unremitting censure and sarcasm would in our present condition—indeed under any condition—be unwise, inasmuch as he has the talent of persuading the masses and the soldiery that his

cause and his honour are the same as theirs, and thus our insults against the despot might be adroitly construed into insults against the French *people*. This would serve him sensibly in the event of his seeking a pretext for war. It behoves us accordingly to say and do nothing which may afford a handle for saying that we have insulted *France*. Even the expression of our condolence, our respectful compassion for her present humiliation and servitude, might very well be distorted into so many impertinent remarks by your sensitive, irritable people. . . . . Meanwhile we entertain the worst opinion of L. N.'s character as regards his propensity to mischief, and his recklessness of consequences. And we apprehend that should the old powers of Europe act in any way to wound his pride, it is far from impossible that he may proclaim himself the ally of the revolutionary principle, and fling himself into the cause of Democracy out of revenge towards the family of Legitimate Kings, who have 'turned the cold shoulder' upon him. I know that

M. Thiers anticipates an interference in Italy of an anti-Austrian complexion, for instance.

"Altogether, you may see, my dear friend, that as matters actually stand, the English do right to consult their own interests by observing a discreet tone *vis-à-vis de votre maître* . . . . All that is urged by the Peace people of Manchester and their disciples about the *interest* of France lying in the maintenance of amicable relations, is now treated as it deserves to be, and we are no longer blind to the fact that Louis Napoleon will never allow considerations, based upon the real interest of *France*, to weigh a feather, one way or other, where his own passions or antipathies are in motion.

". . . . As matters now look, methinks the whole future of your magnificent country is clouded over—war must inevitably prove your perdition; yet how can you escape war with a madman at the head of the Empire? I rejoice to learn that you all disbelieve in the duration of this monstrous imposture; as for myself, I never can make up my mind to regard what is

enacting in France as anything but a lurid pageant. It *must* crumble to pieces, but what is the next change to be? The army will be the arbitrator sooner or later, and will very likely come to be ashamed of the hateful *rôle* they now play." . . . .

Mrs. Grote's own feelings, as expressed above, were never withheld, and never changed. She had derived considerable benefit to her health from the climate of France, and from the quiet seclusion she had found there, while possessing no country seat of their own, in a hired residence —the Ville d'Avray, near St. Cloud—where she had resided many weeks in the summer of 1852. Nevertheless, on answering the hope expressed by the Tocquevilles that she would repeat her visit in 1853 (which she ultimately did), she writes, "I hardly like to frame any project for revisiting Paris just yet. I feel such a repugnance to the idea of coming amidst such *a mob* of money-getters and mountebanks; such a hideous parody and burlesque of the forms of civil government, and such a sad spectacle as

the *élite* of a great nation stifled and oppressed by the despotism of the ignorant mass—*such* repugnance, I repeat,—that I doubt if even my love for my French friends will overweigh it. You had better come and see *us* in England. Your mind will be refreshed by the air of liberty you will respire, and your heart will be cheered by the manifestations of the respect which is borne you by the best among us."

The materials for M. de Tocqueville's unrivalled work, "*Sur l'ancien Régime*," were partially gathered from documents preserved at Tours, near which city he established himself in 1853-4. So interested was Mrs. Grote alike in the distinguished author and his task, that in February, 1854, she spent a fortnight at Tours in order to discuss questions bearing on his undertaking. No individuals could be more conversant with the facts, and more meditative on the mysteries of the French Revolution than Mr. and Mrs. Grote. It formed the topic of many a thoughtful *tête-à-tête*. Hence the tone equally of sympathy and encouragement of her

subsequent letters. Writing to him previously, November 5, 1853, she says, "There is no doubt that the process of reconstructing, in the mind of a modern, a past condition of society, is a far more difficult effort than it would be to imagine one which had never existed at all! A poet, like your Racine or our Shakspeare, could better invent a world and people it out of his own fancy, than a philosopher could rebuild and represent the framework which subsisted a century ago in your wonderful country. It would not be near so great an undertaking to do the like by England. For though we are, in our fashion, exceedingly *changed* since the days of the first George, the *recollection* of the antecedent complexion of society and manners remains well preserved. And so far from the English desiring to bury the past under the weight of its own sins, *we* cling to our traditions, and no topic is more attractive to the British mind than retrospective glances at, and portraitures of the olden time. Now, therefore, your task may well be regarded as laborious, and as one demanding

consecutive and even painful meditation—*piecing* out your faded web as best you may by the help of books relating to the period, and distilling drop by drop the matter of political illustration which you are to present hereafter as a whole. In fact I can hardly figure to myself a more trying pressure upon your intellectual faculties than that of the task you are engaged upon. To unite two widely contrasted forms of society in imagination, and not only to do this but to trace the influence of the antecedent upon the actual one, and *that* by those subtle threads which pass along the framework, like the electric fluid, often eluding the analysis you would fain apply to the phenomena of cause and effect, and puzzling the interpreter to the very depths of his philosophic ability—such a problem is truly worthy of the remarkable individual who has set himself to work upon it. . . . . And what can possibly be more intensely exciting to the meditative man than to be helped to the comprehension of how feelings, sentiments, prejudices, and passions work their way into common

action. It is provoking to hear the rulers of mankind in their empirical talk, discredit the connection between them. I am one of those who believe that every considerable popular manifestation has taken its rise in a long-cherished, long-prevalent state of feeling. But the great, or, as you term them, '*les Grands*,' find it too troublesome to adjust their rule by the existing sentiment, and, *so*, affect to regard the popular tone of feeling as of no moment, and pretend that a government ought not to be influenced by it. Hence the overbearing of dykes at stated periods, the torrents of ill-directed energy, the ignorant and indiscriminate retribution exacted; and this, the *consequence* of misgovernment, is erected into a *warning* not to yield to the demands of popular clamour, *because* when 'the mob' becomes an avenger, it uses its power mischievously, forsooth! You remark with perfect truth, that in spite of the enormous mass of memoirs which have been thrown up (like the ashes out of a crater) by the Revolution, as well as the vast number of works purporting

to be enlightened commentary, and also the endeavours on the part of speculative writers to unravel the mysterious and terrible chaotic history—in spite of all such, the real, the living world of the 18th century has never been brought satisfactorily out—possibly because it has never been clearly understood." *

Again we find her addressing him again, October, 1855, with equal penetration and discrimination, at a later stage of the work. This letter was addressed to the Château de Tocqueville, where he had at length established his residence, and where he developed great interest in the incidents of a country life. "That you should have passed the summer in a comparatively *fallow* state of mind is quite comprehensible, and possibly may ultimately prove beneficial to your cerebral capacity. As I have said on former occasions, intellects which occupy themselves in

* Tocqueville's answer to this letter (November, 1853) is a consistent confirmation of the profound truth of her views:—*Ce monde qui a précédé la Révolution Française est presque aussi difficile à retrouver et à comprendre que les époques antédiluviennes.*

original combinations, extracting from masses of other men's intellectual products the essence of thoughtful inductive speculation—such intellects, I say, *cannot* work steadily; they work *in jets*, and can produce only under certain happy and favourable conditions. The close consecutive attention needed to unravel the past, and to cast together facts, events, and evidences, so as to support a train of preconceived explanations, and to illustrate propositions long fixed in the philosophic mind, such work as this can only be pushed forward when the spirit moves; and your good vein will bubble up afresh ere long, never fear. Lavergne always says *he* cannot work in the country, and I understand why, when one is interested in the daily phenomena of one's rural existence. John S. Mill's father used to say it took him six weeks 'to get up the metaphysical state of mind' after a residence of some months in the country."

It is evident that in the midst of such studies Alexis de Tocqueville avoided even the conversation he loved so well:—"November 23, 1854.

St. Cyr. Votre conversation est un plaisir trop perturbateur pour que je veuille me le donner. Elle est l'une des plus agréables, mais aussi l'une des plus excitantes que je connaisse, parce qu'elle rémue toutes sortes d'idées, et met l'esprit sur pied dans mille chemins."

Alexis de Tocqueville's death, March, 1859, was one of the most poignant griefs in Mrs. Grote's life. Her love and admiration for him were second only to what she felt for her husband. In her words:—"May, 1859. I am for the future safe from the disappearance of such a man from our sight. There is only *one* left whose death could cast me down so low, and God grant that I may go *myself* before *him*. . . . Whoever was honoured with the friendship of Alexis might be regarded as receiving '*La croix d'honneur*.'"

A friendship with the Bunsen family was another episode in her rich life, further cemented by entire coincidence of feeling regarding the causes which took him from England. She had expected a visit from them at their East Burn-

ham residence, and writes the following chatty letter:—"June 2, 1853. The weather, though not summer-like, was fine and bright all the afternoon of yesterday, so that I kept listening for the wheels of 'the fly' till after four o'clock. After that hour I saw that it was hopeless, and consoled myself by reflecting that a far pleasanter visit may be looked for a fortnight hence, when the temperature shall have risen something more conformable to the sun's place in the Ecliptic.

"The 'Country Mouse' had spread a rural board with cream, eggs, new milk, fresh-churned butter, water-cresses, coffee, and gooseberry-fool! Well—the next chance may throw us in strawberry-time . . . . I have within eight miles of me the cottage to which John Milton retired to avoid the Plague of London, and where he composed his immortal poem of 'Paradise Lost.' It is perfectly well attested and the house preserved with care. How pleasant it would be to show the sacred spot to you one of these long summer days!" ("Milnes wrote a

Sonnet on it after accompanying me to the scene some years since, and it is not badly strung.")

Further light is thrown on Tocqueville in conjunction with Chevalier Bunsen after the latter had quitted London, in a letter dated December, 1854, addressed to Madame de Bunsen. Mrs. Grote had planned to visit the Bunsens at their retreat, Charlottenburg, Heidelberg, to meet Tocqueville, then residing at Bonn, but had been prevented by engagements on Mr. Grote's part. "It must suffice to tell you that I have felt truly disappointed at the failure of my scheme, and that my life has been entirely monotonous and unenlivened by even a home tour or a single visit. In short, I begin to regard myself as a near relation of Patient Grizzle! . . . . The only person I have happened to see among those who paid their *devoirs* to the great man at Heidelberg is our dear Mrs. Stanley, who gave me a most captivating account of the whole thing—interior and exterior charms. I spent one long evening at her house a week ago,

which, with another with Lady Granville, and a few of her *habitués* also last week, have positively formed the total of my achievements since August—I defy you to produce my match as a *Hermit.* . . . . I think I wrote to 'Excellency' somewhere about the beginning of August last, explaining the obstacles which prevented my coming over and making one of the trio who had agreed upon a rendezvous at Heidelberg. I think I know the treat it would have afforded me to listen to those two distinguished men conversing together on matters of the deepest importance and blending their respective ideas instructively. M. de T. has always cultivated the philosophic and meditative vein, whilst your '*Gelehrte*' has heaped up stores of learning and historical knowledge on which *that* faculty must be employed if it is to confer benefits on the intellectual world. M. de T. (as M. Bunsen would quickly discern) is *not* a great reader. Thus, he would be all the more disposed to appreciate the vast resources supplied by M. de Bunsen's wide and varied researches, and exact

and retentive memory. He was accordingly struck with M. de B.'s remarkable opulence of mind (for I can call it by no less a phrase), and by his *adventurous* speculations and theories respecting topics of profound interest to the philological student, as well as profitable in the sense of enlightening the general reader. M. de T. wrote me a letter shortly after his conversations with 'Excellency' which I only regret I cannot without indiscretion hand to you for perusal. It would give you high satisfaction to learn, through this indisputable channel, how entirely M. de Bunsen had justified the high expectations M. de T. had conceived of his political sagacity, and his rare gifts of mind as well as noble philanthropy." . . . . . .

# CHAPTER VII.

THIS sketch might have been much enriched by extracts from letters received by Mrs. Grote. No one possessed a larger or more varied collection. There was hardly a name of note which did not endorse sentiments of personal respect, as well as subjects of general interest addressed to her. The number extended even to such medical men, who, by her necessary resort to foreign countries and bathing-places, had become acquainted with a patient of a calibre of mental power unknown to them before. A class of indiscreet literature, however, at variance with her notions of propriety, made her anxious to obviate any possible misuse of letters in her possession. An allusion by her in a letter to Mr. Hayward,

noting what she feared was the growing prevalence of this taste, thus concludes:—

"Moral.—Since a literary executor is an imaginary character, properly speaking, no one, having important and interesting MSS., is safe in leaving them behind him."

She accordingly destroyed all the letters she felt could offer temptation for the literary market, and among them a large number from Sydney Smith. We must, therefore, turn to a few more letters of her own, and of those too few are recoverable, before concluding this imperfect tribute. The thoughtful and philosophic side of her mind has been represented by what has been already given; and, as Thought entered into all she wrote and said, it would be difficult to instance a topic in which it was not incorporated. But in the short space we have allotted to this imperfect sketch, we are anxious to quote what may be called typical specimens of the many-sided mind—taking first a few to Dean Stanley and others in her latter years.

After studying his lectures on the Jewish

Church, and the third volume of the "Prince Consort's Memoirs," she says, "You know my propensity to *pair* characters, past and present" (as with Gambetta and Brougham). "Well, I find that *Stockmar had* existed B.C., second century or so, in the person of Aristobulus —see 'Jewish Church,' Lecture XLVII. 'He is one of those mysterious persons of whom history speaks but little,' &c., clearly prefigured, eh?

"I am assiduously studying my Jewish Church, for which *institution*, however, I find it difficult to get up any interest or sympathy. *Moral* of your Epopée. Judas Maccabæus corresponds with the lesson afforded by our Prince Consort's exemplary life. Both treated alike. Judas' name heard of no more. It seems to me that nobody survives except kings, who have sat on a throne, and fighting commanders.

"The history of Judas Maccabæus is a striking example of the heroic-barbarous. As for that everlasting bone of contention, old Jerusalem, it is the most signal illustration of the term fighting for an idea, that I can call to mind.

"Colenso's queries as to how peoples and armies got victualled in the days B.C., recur to one's memory forcibly in reading the campaigns in Palestine. The host of elephants, too, why they must have eaten up all the forest-trees for subsistence. The curious fact of the ineffaceability of the Jews runs through your pages with a sort of preter-human tenacity. You *must* look at 'Knox on Race'—anon—I will lend it you. I have been amused by your account of the solemn registration in 'Stationers' Hall' of the recognised Scriptures, B.C. 160 or so. The stamp, however, did not clear them through the gates of the criticism of a later age. Hoping to assist at the Feast of Tabernacles, of the 3rd," &c. . . . .

To the same.—"May 13, 1873.—I am deeply affected by the death of poor Mill. For a day or two after the news reached me, I really was incapable of busying myself with anything, and lay fallow, as it were, hoping the pain would grow bearable after a space, which of course it has done, though I still mourn my old friend

deeply. I have during the last twenty years felt poignant sorrow through death of friends, and for four individuals above all—

"CATHERINE STANLEY,
FELIX MENDELSSOHN,
ALEXIS DE TOCQUEVILLE,
J. S. MILL.

"Ah! the penalty of living to undergo the misfortune of seeing one's juniors go first! But, again, had I not been permitted to reach an advanced age, I could not have reared the humble monument to my partner, which you are so good as to admire. So in this, as in all other human affairs, all is ordered wisely. Amen!"

And again:—"I send you 'P. Hamerton.'* But pray keep it carefully till we meet again, as it belongs to H. Reeve, and not to me: I wish it did. Should you find leisure to look into the volume, you will gain thereby. The perspicacious way in which two or three social forces

* "All Round my House," by Philip Hamerton.

are expounded will afford you instruction and interest. See my 'finger posts,' on fly-leaf. Social philosophy has always been a favourite study with me; and I am sure it will be time well bestowed if my dear poetical philosopher should find himself shut up with my book for an odd half-hour.

"I saw —— yesterday, after a separation of three years. She was unbounded in her declarations of undying attachment, '*et le reste*;' and we parted under engagement to meet in the Dean's garden on the 3rd. Both sincere, yet, alas! both uncertain—I, from infirmity—she, from—*you* know what.

"We *had* a most agreeable dinner certainly; and others among the guests said so too. Ah! the one thing awanting! Thank God for the blessings *remaining* to me, among the foremost of which ranks the love of such as yourself for the ancient fossil,—H. G."

Mrs. Grote had too much knowledge of her fellow-creatures to be ever extreme in her condemnations; and, especially, she had a kind of

philosophic patience with a class, known pretty well to all who frequent society, to one of which she alluded in the letter above:—

"Good Friday, 1870. — Your sketch of Mrs. —— is characteristic; but she is not insincere for all that. That class never are intentionally so. It is the inseparable quality of 'the species' to be always impelled by the humour of the moment, and to be led away by the chance sympathy of any one whom they desire to attract. They treat men and women as we do nosegays, valued for the transient sensation they provide, and then left on the bench without a regret. But the quantity such people get out of life is wonderful."

As a specimen of her justice in seizing upon the right points of aim in a character otherwise uncongenial to her, a quotation from a letter to Mr. Hayward, Dec., 1873, may be given:—

"I say, did you read Mr. Gladstone's 'Éloge of Bishop Wilberforce'? It was a real apotheosis. I see that nothing is so captivating to the

English mind as untiring energy. A man who never knows what fatigue means, is a king among men at once. But I own the Bishop *was* a remarkable example of well applied energy in the sphere to which he was appointed. He kept every subordinate up to the mark also; and no sentinel could afford to drop asleep at his post, at least in the diocese of Winchester. The purpose being to quicken the religious zeal of his countrymen, no one ever laboured harder to promote it than the late Bishop."

Again, "March 14, 1874. Mr. Gladstone's letter to Lord Granville is just like him. It is wise, discerning, and self-respecting; but if you or I had wished to state our views, one fourth part of all this would have sufficed us. Nothing so rare now-a-days as condensed meaning *à la* Sydney Smith."

It may be concluded from what has gone before that with this lady's interest in all conditions of human life that of her own sex occupied a prominent part in her mind. Even the modern subject of Protestant Sisterhoods—

viewed abstractedly—did not escape her. As early as 1856 she writes, *à propos* of unmarried women, as follows, to Mrs. Stanley. "Having no regularly defined circle of duties and occupations for practical employment of faculties, the poor mind and imagination must 'pay the scot,' and so become overwrought—one knows the rest. Many a time have I reflected upon the usefulness of Protestant Sisterhoods, whose lives at least could wear away without perpetual conflict with worldly temptations. What more unfair than to tie a living being to a post in sight of all manner of enjoyments, and varied curious provocatives! Yet this is what happens to a single woman in civilized society. Accordingly, self must be crushed, if she would avoid anguish. The safe course is to engage in a course of self-sacrifice, which supplies lively emotions, even though they be of an ascetic character, and thus the individual escapes the pitfalls which beset the paths of pleasure. Think not, oh, maiden! to put to profit the gifts you possess in any other shape. Well does the

priest to enforce the doctrine that to suffer is the true duty of a Christian. If we women did not elevate *suffering* into a pleasure we should be left *sans*—all other pleasures being hedged round with thorns. These views may appear absurd, but they have been unfolded by years of close meditation, and I can trace the course of the analysis by which I have arrived at them as clearly as that of a river on a map. Everybody helps to bolster up ascetic doctrines, naturally, because the more sacrifices the greater the alleviation of the necessities under which all mankind labour. All human sympathy accordingly flows in the direction of self abnegation—not in that of enjoyment. *Men* sympathise with each other's pleasures, it is true, and why? because men do not require self-abnegation of one another—at least not beyond a very moderate extent—*vide* Milnes' Preface to 'Palm Leaves,' where much just reflection is apparent concerning the relative position of women in the East and in the West of Europe.

"But here I am launched into a 'preachment'

without intending it. Excuse the dyke bursting, as it is apt to do whenever I let my thoughts loose upon the condition of the oppressed half of the human race."

Now for a specimen of admirable common sense, founded on the profoundest knowledge of life, and available for the married woman, as distinguished from the single. The following is a passage from a letter to a near relative, as early as 1842: "I am glad you lay my lectures to heart. It is clear that unless you turn over a new leaf your domestic comfort will be in imminent danger of being stranded. You have a good understanding and a good heart, and it would be a sin and a shame to nullify these for want of a little self-catechising and discipline. T—— is a man of very fine morality, based on the soundest views of human obligations, and you must not expect to have all the lesser amenities and ornamental qualities combined with the sober, rational, busy, citizen character. He treats you most kindly, but will not consent to take the exact impress of *your* habits

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"Sept. 17, 1849.—Dear Mrs. Stanley, may I not steal into the house of mourning silently and respectfully thus, and pressing your widowed

hand, tell you, without speech, that my heart has been full of you and your precious family since the fatal news reached me. Believe me, no one, having so little *right* to grieve for you and yours, has more completely shared the painful penalty of sympathy than myself. . . . . How few of us are ever permitted to *run out* any given course of life! All human life is made up of chapters, short or long, as it may be. But few lives represent an unbroken volume! And to new-cast one's newly modified course *well* is a touchstone of the real mental powers. To put out what vital resources may lend vigour to an existence sundered from its second self, and preserve it from mouldering away, is no less a proof of wisdom than of richness of endowments, and forms a better monument to lost happiness than a continual drooping grief—the resource of too many—who, with a thousand fine qualities, lack strength and self-knowledge —divine gifts! One is the better for seeing the character of woman upheld, even through the agency of grievous trials. It is with moral dis-

locations somewhat after the manner of material lesions—'*Nature sets up a process.*' It is most curious to observe this great principle running through all the physical operations of nature; and I am persuaded that an analogous action takes place in the mental system of sentient beings. Where life *is*, means of spending life must be found."

And again, to another mourner, having meanwhile known severe suffering herself:—

"April, 1867. And, dear Lady ——, are you growing more calm? Are you settling to an isolated existence, somewhat more successfully than when I last talked with you? This is *the* capital trial of us, deep feeling, true women—the difficulty of *living*, when deprived of the consciousness of being a portion of another's life, and drawing one's vital existence from the united resources of *both*. *This* is what constitutes the severest form of privation which constant souls can undergo. You may, and I trust will, live to *bear* this; but never will you lose the feeling which underlies all your actions,

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all your reflections. You know better than to believe those who tell you otherwise."

In no respect was Mrs. Grote's knowledge of the human heart more apparent than in her intercourse with a mourner. With the unfailing freshness she put into all she said, she called herself "a good affliction woman." In the first place, she *admitted* the reality of the trial, without which no one attempting to help —no matter in what—can be either just or kind. Then she dealt in no commonplaces on any subject in the world, least of all on that of deep grief. She knew that *nothing* could soothe which had not the ring of truth. There was therefore no prescribing this or that nostrum (which prescribers have never proved) for the cure of sorrow—no pharisaical reproofs for its supposed indulgence. Diversion of thought was given in the least suspected way: the languor of the mind stimulated by healthy counter interest; while as to cases where the anguish was still fresh, no words ever more truly hit the mark —"Let the wound bleed."

Lord Jeffrey said in his old days, which were some of the gentlest and most affectionate that could be passed, "It is poor wine that grows sour with age." To those who have drawn a just opinion of Mrs. Grote's character from these chapters, it is almost needless to say that her declining years gave force to this axiom. She had traversed all the stages of life—the frolic of childhood, the mirth of youth, the strength and thought of middle age—and each stage, it may be said, "in character." And now her latter days embodied a store-house of all that had gone before, with the latest and ripest fruits added. She had deeply studied the successive lessons of life, and met the last and gravest with reverence and thankfulness. She grew gentle and tender, at no sacrifice of courage and brilliancy — more tolerant of faults and follies—even to the endurance of bores, without betraying it. She clung more to her friends and to her kindred, and became a centre, round which gathered the tenderest deference and affection. Perhaps at no time of her life, and

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locations somewhat after the manner of material lesions—'*Nature sets up a process.*' It is most curious to observe this great principle running through all the physical operations of nature; and I am persuaded that an analogous action takes place in the mental system of sentient beings. Where life *is*, means of spending life must be found."

And again, to another mourner, having meanwhile known severe suffering herself:—

"April, 1867. And, dear Lady ——, are you growing more calm? Are you settling to an isolated existence, somewhat more successfully than when I last talked with you? This is *the* capital trial of us, deep feeling, true women—the difficulty of *living*, when deprived of the consciousness of being a portion of another's life, and drawing one's vital existence from the united resources of *both*. *This* is what constitutes the severest form of privation which constant souls can undergo. You may, and I trust will, live to *bear* this; but never will you lose the feeling which underlies all your actions,